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Behold this Heart
which hath so loved men!

MONTH OF THE SACRED HEART

EXTRACTED FROM THE LIFE AND

WRITINGS OF

Blessed Margaret Mary.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH

BY THE

VERY REV. H. B. MACKEY, O.S.B.

(CANON OF NEWPORT AND MENEVIA)

With Preface by the Translator.

"I make thee heiress of My Heart and all its treasures for time and eternity, permitting thee to use them according to thy desires; and I promise thee that thou shalt never fail of assistance till My Heart fails in power."—p. 2.

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TO HIS EMINENCE

HENRY EDWARD, CARDINAL MANNING,

ARCHBISHOP OF WESTMINSTER,

WHO AMONGST INNUMERABLE GLORIOUS WORKS

IN THE CAUSE OF RELIGION AND CHARITY

HAS MOST ZEALOUSLY PROMOTED

THE DEVOTION TO THE

Sacred Heart of Jesus,

THIS TRANSLATION, PUBLISHED IN THE

YEAR OF THE

SILVER JUBILEE

OF HIS EPISCOPAL CONSECRATION,

IS MOST HUMBLY DEDICATED.

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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

THE present translation represents a selection,* made by the Sisters of the Visitation of Orleans, from the two volumes of the *Life and Works of Blessed Margaret Mary Alacoque.*† Its object, as the Sisters say in a short Notice to the Reader, is "first, to make known the Sacred Heart, as Christ has revealed It Himself, and the interior and exterior homage with which He desires It to be honoured; and next to lead the soul to render love for love by the practice of the solid virtues of which Blessed Margaret Mary gives such heroic examples."

As the extracts are most judiciously chosen and skilfully arranged, and are in the very terms of the originals, we have here in compendious form the whole of the great revelation, partly in Our Lord's words, as transmitted by the faithful and authorized Evangelist of the Sacred Heart, partly in her own words, inspired by Him, and partly in the record of her virtues and of

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* *Mois du Sacré Cœur, extrait des écrits de la Be Marguérite-Marie Alacoque.* 4th Edition, Paris, Poussielgue, 1884. The short appendix has not been translated.

† *Vie et Oeuvres de la Be M. M. Alacoque.* 2 Tomes. Paray-le-Monial, Visitation: Paris, Poussielgue. The approbation of the Bishop of Autun is dated 10th January, 1867. The various works indicated as the sources of the extracts in the present translation are contained in these two volumes.

the sublime graces conferred upon her. In offering the work to the English reader, it seems well to say something on devotion to the Sacred Heart in general, and on the authority of these teachings in particular.

The object of the devotion is the wounded Heart of Jesus, taken to signify and symbolize His redeeming love. Here is first proposed His physical Heart, His Heart of flesh, the material organ of His love, which, like every other member of His Sacred Humanity, is worshipful with divine honour as belonging to the Person of the Word Eternal; that Heart which as fount and store-house of the Precious Blood is a chief centre of His corporeal life; that Heart in which met in mysterious conjunction His intelligence and His emotions, His will and those sensitive affections which in ordinary men are called passions; that Heart which grew hotter or colder, beat faster or slower, throbbed more or less violently under the influence of love and love's attendant movements, desire and joy, or compassion, or sadness and fear and lack of sympathy.

The word Heart is used here also in a figurative sense, for these emotions themselves: as in the expressions, a tender heart, a noble heart, a broken heart. Indeed even in the literal or physical sense the Sacred Heart is not proposed in Its simple state, but as wounded, nor is it the physical Heart as it would be regarded by anatomists, though of course it would also in this aspect be worthy of divine honour, but our Lord's actual Heart as Blessed Margaret Mary saw It, idealized by

encircling thorns and outbursting flames, " more brilliant than the sun, and transparent as crystal." (3rd Day.)

But principally, if not primarily, the word Heart is here taken in a derived sense, better called moral than merely figurative, to represent at once the subject and the object of love, all that in the Saviour belongs to love. Such a signification is given to the word heart by the consent of men of every age and race. It has its origin in the physical sense, as we have seen, but goes far beyond it; for Our Lord's physical Heart is but subordinately concerned in the action of His love, and has, moreover, various other functions to fulfil.

In these various meanings, the Sacred Heart, though venerated in Itself and in Its special aspects, is not withdrawn in our consideration from the Being of which It forms a part. As It is the living Heart of Jesus, the thought of It almost necessarily induces a certain consciousness of His divine Person. It is Christ loving and Christ loved; and our devotion only singles out and draws to a focus that in Him which makes Him most infinitely worthy of our love, gratitude and honour. Indeed the Sacred Heart is now rarely presented *alone* in sculpture or painting intended for public veneration, but is seen on or in that Sacred Bosom where it ever burns with love of us.

The character and spirit, the fruits and exercises of the devotion, follow from its object. It is concerned chiefly with the Blessed Sacrament, in which the Sacred

Heart is actually present, and which, as St. Francis de Sales says,* is the crown of God's love-dealings with man, and the proper means of that union which is the ultimate aim and consummation of love. Again, it is identified with devotion to the Passion, whether we consider Christ's interior dispositions and sufferings, or what he endured exteriorly. The true significance and final efficacy are given to that exhibition of divine love, faithful to man unto death, when, after all the awful series of pains, insults, derelictions, and all agonies of body and soul, we see that side opened, that Heart displayed and pierced, and, as it would seem, by a pulsation after death, the last drops of Precious Blood poured forth. On these two mysteries, then, does the worship of the Sacred Heart chiefly turn, and its fruits and practices lie chiefly here; that is, in sympathy with Jesus suffering and dying; in acts of loving condolence, offering and reparation, particularly through Holy Communion; in mourning and watching with Him; in conforming ourselves to Him, by love of the Cross, by charity, humility and obedience, as the virtues which He loved best, and because He loved them best. These virtues, or "predilections of the Sacred Heart," are exquisitely treated on the 15th and 16th days, and every page of this little work is redolent of the Passion and the Eucharist; but there is no mystery which the Sacred Heart does not regard and beautify, no virtue or

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* *Love of God*, ii. 22.

holy practice which it does not include. It places the mysteries of the nature and attributes of God, of Creation and Providence, in their loveliest aspect. "God is love," * and His love is not properly appreciated in its manifestations unless its source be also regarded. Even under the old Dispensation He allured men to worship in His Temple by the promise that His eyes and His heart should be there always. † Love of Christ's Mother, love of souls, love of the poor and afflicted, lie in our very path when following the inclinations of the Heart of Jesus, and under the guidance of Blessed Margaret Mary, we are sweetly and immediately led, through this same Sacred Heart, to all parts of the Christian system, even to those which might seem at first the most remote from its spirit. How vividly does she bring the Last Truths before us when she says (Concluding Day): "It is a dreadful thing to fall at death into the hands of a living God, when by sin we have taken ourselves out of the arms of a dying God;" or when she repeats Christ's terrific description of the agony of His Heart in the Garden of Gethsemane, and then His declaration that the guilty soul will feel the same at the tribunal of God's justice. (9th Day.)

The foregoing description of the devotion to the Sacred Heart is enough to show its harmony with Catholic faith, and to justify its private use, but a stronger authorization is required before it can enter

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* I *John*, iv. 16. † III *Kings*, ix. 3.

into the solemn or public *cultus* of the Church, can have its own ritual and feasts, its approved practices and formulas of praise and invocation. This authorization lies in the express declaration of our divine Master's will, through the Blessed Margaret Mary Alacoque. She was born in the district of the Charolais, in the East of France, on St. Magdalen's Day, 22nd July, 1647. From her infancy she was personally taught and directed by Our Lord, both interiorly and by distinct outward manifestations, corresponding with His sublime favours by a life of angelic innocence and ecstatic love. At the age of 23, He led her into the Monastery of the Visitation at Paray-le-Monial, in the diocese of Autun, and during 20 years, till her death on the 17th October, 1690, He continued His communications, making her the depositary of His revelation, the first and perfect disciple of His Sacred Heart in its new public manifestation, and His apostle to announce it to the world. She gave her message by speech and by writings. Her spoken words were placed on record by those to whom they were addressed. Her writings, which still exist in autograph, and which in their published form constitute the 2nd volume of her *Life and Works*, consist of 133 *Letters*, addressed chiefly to her Sisters in religion, her *Life by herself*, written under obedience to her director, Fr. Rolin; some of her *Particular Admonitions* to her novices; a small number of *Various writings* of the same character as the Admonitions; a collection of *Prayers* and *Canticles*.

The truthfulness of her testimony is proved intrinsically, first, by the sweetness and consistency of her doctrine, of which enough has been said; next, by the artless sincerity of her language, in which there is no exaggeration, no sentimentality. The language of ardent love always seems strained to those who do not love, but the mere wish to love is enough to make us feel the reality and propriety of the expressions used by her. Moreover, there is in her teachings, as compared with those of some others who have been favoured with divine revelations, a certain soberness and simplicity, a sort of sense of responsibility, which, even apart from the authority of the Church, highly recommends her message to that Church. We are told "not to believe every spirit," * but we are also told to "try the spirits whether they be of God." Every sign of the operation of the Divine Spirit is verified here, perseverance in her vocation, tranquil assurance, complete submission to superiors; † and far from seeking to display or magnify God's gifts to her, she manifested them only with the extremest reluctance, as is clear from the Letters quoted on the 30th Day, and above all from Letter cxxvi. to Father Rolin.

Her veracity is proved extrinsically by a life of perfect sanctity, and by miracles, which were continued after her death. Her life of perfection, and

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* I *John* iv. 1.

† See the *Treatise on the Love of God*, by St. Francis de Sales, viii., 11, 12, 13.

a sufficient number of these miracles, were proved in the episcopal process of 1715, by the sworn testimony of eye-witnesses, whose original depositions are still to be seen in the archives of the Visitation of Paray-le-Monial and of the Diocese of Autun. The substance of them forms the 1st volume of her *Life and Works.* The solemn seal of the Church's approbation was placed on all, after the usual rigid scrutiny, by the Act of Beatification, 18th September, 1864.

No more is necessary to establish the truth of these revelations, or to make us safe in following them out into practice, but it may still be useful to observe how fully they harmonize with Holy Scripture, and the traditions of the Church.

They might seem, indeed, at first sight, to diverge a little from the ordinary simplicity of Scriptural expression, but on reflection it will be seen that all they do is to bring into prominence certain truths, and to repeat and amplify certain teachings, which are as truly contained in the word of God as are those which are more frequently and explicitly insisted upon. The theology of the Sacred Heart is as it were the marrow, the honey, the sweetest part of the Scripture, explained and developed. We have the outlines of it in those manifold passages which express the divine tenderness, and particularly in those verses of the Psalmist and the Prophets which describe the outpouring of love that is to be in later times, as in Isaias lxvi.: "You shall be carried at the breasts, and upon the knees shall they

caress you; as one whom the mother caresseth, so will I comfort you." The Canticle of Canticles is the monument of the love which God, the Creator of the human heart and Implanter in it of all its tenderness, asks for and returns, even in this world, to the soul which renouncing merely human love, makes itself worthy of the plenitude of divine. In the New Testament we have naturally still stronger manifestations of the spirit of the Sacred Heart, in the thrilling words which from time to time fall from the pen of the inspired writers, revealing Christ's love and compassion for man, and His desire of man's love, and will, and sympathy, in return. As to the last night of His life, the narration of St. John is all impregnated with the revelation of love. He first tells us * that up to this all the acts of Christ have been love—"having loved His own who were in the world," and that those chief ones which still remain to be effected are also from love—"He loved them to the end." The writer of the impassioned words is "the disciple whom Jesus loved," and His attitude as He lies on the bosom of Jesus is of itself a revelation of that unseen love. This must be read and pondered before we come to those succeeding words of the same Apostle, which are a true prophecy of the special worship of the Sacred Heart: "But one of the soldiers opened His side with a spear, and immediately there came out blood and water. And he that saw it

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* *John*, xiii. 1.

gave testimony, and his testimony is true, and he knoweth that he saith truth, that you also may believe." *

There is here, when we consider the fact, the writer, his dwelling upon the fact, and his urging it on the attention of the Church, a sort of first but reserved revelation, which, when the full revelation is made, holds a somewhat corresponding relation to it that the Old Testament holds to the New. The same Evangelist relates how Christ showed His wounded side to His beloved ones, telling Thomas to put his hand into it that he might believe. With all this must be put what the same St. John said to St. Gertrude, twelve hundred years later, but four hundred before the birth of Blessed Margaret Mary, when she asked him how it was that he had said nothing of the beatings of that Sacred Heart on which his head had reposed. "I was commissioned," he answered, "to announce to the new-born Church the doctrine of the uncreated Word of God the Father, but as to the sweetness of the movements of that Sacred Heart, God reserved it to Himself to make them known in the last days, when the world shall have begun to fall into decay, in order to rekindle the flame of His charity, which then will have grown cold." †

This reference to S. Gertrude introduces us to that devotion to the Sacred Heart which existed in the Church before the time of Blessed Margaret Mary, and the gradual development of which is a further proof of

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* *John* xix., 34, 35. † Lanspergius, *Life of St. Gertrude*, iv. 4.

the legitimacy of her own teaching. It could not but be, with the door opened as it were by the lance and the mysterious indications of Holy Scripture, that the Heart of Our Lord should be thought of, addressed, entered into, by contemplative and devout souls. There is a continuous chain of such references to It, particularly in the interpretation of the Canticles and of the passages of St. John above cited. It will be enough here to appeal to the *Meditations* and *Prayers* of S. Anselm for the 11th century, the *Sermons* and *Poems* of S. Bernard, and the *De Emmanuele* of Richard of S. Victor, for the 12th, as examples of the way in which the theology and devotion of the Sacred Heart had begun to enter into the mind and practice of the Church. In the 13th century, we have, amongst others, S. Gertrude and S. Ludgarde, who describe favours of Our Lord to them exactly similar to those which He vouchsafed to Blessed Margaret Mary, and use language as explicit as hers, and even stronger, about the Sacred Heart. To the latter of them was granted the privilege which was also given to S. Catherine of Sienna in the next century, of exchanging hearts with Our Lord.

In this 14th century we have many more souls admitted into the sanctuary of the Sacred Heart, foremost among them being S. Margaret of Cortona, who again is a sort of type of her Blessed namesake in her visions and language, and Blessed Angela of Foligno, who was devoted to Our Lord's Heart, and to whom He said that there should be in the later days saints greater even

than in the earlier, because He would reveal His love more fully to them. The tradition remains unbroken through the 15th and 16th centuries, though the names of the favoured ones of Jesus are less generally known,* until we come to the first Fathers of the Society of Jesus, who knew and began to communicate the treasures of their Master's Heart as volunteers even before they received their regular commission to be its preachers throughout the world.

With the opening of Blessed Margaret Mary's century appears S. Francis de Sales, the founder of the Order to which she belonged, which having for the spirit of its daughters to be meek and humble of heart, was the natural birth-place and home of the new revelation. In S. Francis de Sales we have the devotion almost formed, and only requiring the signal from Our Lord, and the recognition of this signal by His Church, to start into full life. Not reckoning the innumerable references to it in his general works, or his treatment of the theology of such visions and such spiritual life as that of Blessed Margaret Mary in the *Treatise on the Love of God*, we have in his *Sermon on S. John before the Latin Gate*, the enunciation of what may be called the immediate principles of the devotion: "Christ's sacred side was opened, first, to show His great desire to give us the blessings of His Heart, and

* The reader will find most of what is said here, and many other facts concerning Blessed Margaret Mary's precursors in the worship of the Sacred Heart, in the magnificent work of Fr. Alet, S.J. *La France et le Sacré Cœur*. Paris, Dumoulin, 1889.

that Heart Itself; secondly, to invite us to repose there as our refuge in all our tribulations; thirdly, to see His love, and so be excited to love Him." Blessed Margaret Mary is explicit as to this position of her saintly Father: "Our holy Founder, that true friend of the Heart of God, has been the principal agent *(moteur)* in this gift of salvation, to obtain it for our Institute, because Satan, bursting with rage against it, seeks to destroy its spirit and so to ruin it."* The eminent Cardinal to whom this translation is dedicated begs the Holy Father "to confer upon S. Francis de Sales the aureola of Doctor as upon the interpreter of divine love, and the legitimate parent of the *cultus* of the Sacred Heart of Jesus." †

Just after the death of S. Francis de Sales we have the remarkable series of exercises of devotion to the Sacred Heart by Fr. Drusbricki, a Polish Jesuit, ‡ and in the middle of this same 17th century we find the veneration of the Sacred Hearts both of Jesus and Mary propagated, with episcopal approbation, by the venerable Fr. Eudes. For instance, he had procured the establishment of the feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in the abbey of Montmartre, the very site where the great basilica now rises in reparation for the infidelity of France, in 1670, the year in which Blessed Margaret Mary entered the Visitation; and in the diocese of

* *Life by her Contemp.* p. 287.

† *Process of Doctorate.* Postulata. Num. xvii.

‡ *The Heart of Jesus, the goal of all hearts,* by Fr. Gaspar Drusbricki, S.J. Translated by the late Most Rev. G. Porter, S.J., Abp. of Bombay. Messenger Office, St. Helens, Lancashire, 1890.

Autun to which she belonged, the feast of the most pure Heart of Mary had been kept, through his exertions, from 1648.

Side by side with this advance in dogma and ritual towards the full establishment of the devotion must be noticed a corresponding development of Christian art and symbolism. We have the *Chrisma ad lanceam* * amongst the Carthusians, from the 14th century, in which century also, apparently, we find the three pierced Hearts in the arms of the Order of Penitents founded by S. Margaret of Cortona. The arms of the Visitation already contained the wounded Heart, surrounded by the crown of thorns, a device which had been anticipated a hundred years earlier in the pectoral cross of Thomas Beech or Marshall, the martyred abbot of Colchester, † and became very common in the first half of the 17th century. We must not include amongst the emblems anterior to the time of Blessed Margaret Mary the remarkable carving of the Sacred Heart in the chief panel of the Queen of England's *prie-Dieu* in S. George's chapel, Windsor, because this would seem to have been executed for Mary of Modena, the wife of James II., and so to have derived its inspiration, through the Venerable Fr. de la Colombière, her preacher, from the revelation made to the Blessed Sister herself.

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* That is, the transfixing of the Saviour's initial, in the inscription I H S, with a lance.

† See *Henry VIII. and the English Monasteries.* By Fr. A. Gasquet, O.S.B. Vol II., p. 384.

All this in no way supersedes her work, but only leads up to it. In most cases there were important internal differences between the devotion as proposed by her predecessors and the devotion as revealed to her. Fr. Eudes, for instance, preached the Sacred Heart as the fountain and symbol of Christ's love in general; she chiefly asked reparation to His wounded love. With others this devotion was but one of several; the original title of Fr. Druzbricki's little work was *the Heart of Jesus and the Blessed Trinity the goal of all hearts*; she had but this sole treasure, this one end of life. The united words of the others on the Sacred Heart would not equal what she has said alone, as again her forms of speech, her practices, have that perfect appropriateness * which seems to make them the natural expression of the devotion. And the essential though external difference between her teaching and that of all others is that theirs was private, or was approved at most by merely

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* This appropriateness to its subject may be called the distinguished excellence of her style, which necessarily therefore partakes of the nobleness and beauty of that subject. For all its simplicity it is filled with the poetry of the heart. We must remember that all her writings are of the nature of letters, except her few prayers and canticles, and none were prepared or intended for the public eye. Yet beyond a rectification of structure here and there, the critic finds almost nothing that needs alteration, so rightly was she guided by natural refinement and good sense.

She often uses such forms as, "it seems to me," "if I am not mistaken." These must not usually be taken as implying any real doubt as to what Our Lord said or meant. They are only an expression of her natural modesty, and a carrying out of a direction which Mother de Greyfié gave her to support her humility. After

local and subordinate superiors, while hers was a mission to the whole Church, and is confirmed by the supreme Apostolic power.

This general argument, from the harmony of the new revelation with the tradition and tendency of the Church at the time when it was made, is strengthened by special considerations of place and persons. It is a striking lesson that the newest and freest of devotions should be made to spring in the Order of the Visitation, which is the one distinguished, out of all the Church's Orders, for minuteness of rule and attachment to original customs. It is still more noteworthy that in thus showing the excellence of that justice which neglects nothing, and in thus recommending itself, so to speak, by the authority of the name of S. Francis de Sales, the Sacred Heart vindicated the spirit of that great Saint, and showed that his was "the perfect law of liberty," * meant not to bind souls, but to release them from their lower selves that they might be free to be

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beginning a sentence with such words she forgets them afterwards, as, for instance : "It seems to me that the Sacred Heart showed me many names that were inscribed therein.... but It did not tell me that Its friends should have no crosses." (10th Day.) The above remark is important because of what is called the 12th Promise, (9th Day) that those who should communicate on the first Friday of the month for nine successive Fridays should receive the grace of final perseverance. Her qualification, "if I am not mistaken," is not meant to make the promise uncertain. At the same time, it scarcely requires saying that such promises, while they certify the offer of special graces on God's part, do not absolve man from his universal duty of co-operation and effort.

* *James* i. 25.

O my only love, why dost Thou not leave me in the common path of the daughters of Sainte-Marie ?* Hast Thou brought me into this house to ruin me? Give these precious graces to those cherished souls who will better correspond with them, and will honour Thee more than I do, since I do nothing but resist. I want solely Thy cross and Thy love; these are enough to make me a good religious, which is my one desire.

"This divine Saviour made me the following answer: 'Let us strive together, my daughter, I am content; and we will see who will gain the victory, Creator or creature, strength or weakness, He who can do all things or she who can do nothing. But the one who shall be the victor shall be so for ever.' These words cast me into a great confusion, upon which He said to me: 'Know that I am not offended at all these struggles and this opposition which thou makest against me through obedience, because for obedience I gave My life; but I would have thee learn that I am the absolute master of My gifts and of My creatures, and that nothing can hinder Me from accomplishing My designs.'" †

On other occasions, Our Lord further said to her "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away without their effect. ‡ I will reign in spite of my enemies, and I will effect the design for which I have chosen thee, in spite of all the efforts

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† *Life by her Contemp.* I., p. 71. ‡ *Ibid.* p. 120.

of those who would oppose it." This led her to say to Him with her ordinary confidence: "Ah! my beloved Saviour, when will that happy moment arrive? While awaiting it I remit the defence of Thy cause to Thyself, while I will suffer in silence." *

Prayer to the Sacred Heart of Jesus through the Blessed Virgin.

"O Virgin Mother of God, most holy, most worthy of love, and most glorious, our dear Mother, mistress and advocate, behold we throw ourselves with one accord at thy feet, to renew to thee our vows of fidelity and service, and to beseech thee that as belonging to thee thou wouldst offer, dedicate, consecrate and immolate us to the Sacred Heart of the adorable Jesus, ourselves and all that we are, all that we shall do and suffer, without reserving anything to ourselves, desiring no other liberty than to love Him, no other glory than to belong to Him as slaves and victims of His pure love, no other will or power than to please and satisfy Him in all things, be it at the cost of our lives.

O our sweet hope, make us feel the power which thou hast with this loving Heart of Jesus, and use the acceptableness which thou hast with Him to establish us therein for ever. Beseech Him to exert his sovereign empire over our souls by making His love reign in our hearts, to the end that He may perfect us and may transform us entirely into Himself. May He be our Father, our Spouse, our defence, our treasure, our delight, our love and our all in all, destroying and

* *Life by her Contemp.* I., p. 211.

annihilating within us all that is of us, and replacing it by all that is of Him, that we may become acceptable to Him. May He be the support of our helplessness, the strength of our weakness, the joy of all our sorrows.

O Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, repair all the short comings of ours; supply what is wanting to us; inflame our hearts with your holy ardours, burn away all the tepidity and faintheartedness which we let mingle with our love and service of You; for we desire to make all our good and happiness in living and dying as slaves of the adorable Heart of Jesus, as daughters and servants of His holy Mother."*

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* *Little Book of Prayers.* II., p. 478.

1st Day.

The Heart of Jesus begins to manifest itself to Blessed Margaret Mary.

BLESSED Margaret Mary was in retreat in preparation for the religious profession, when Our Lord said to her after Holy Communion: "Behold the wound of My side, in which thou art to make thy abode now and ever; in it thou wilt be able to preserve the robe of innocence with which I have reclothed thy soul, that thou mayest henceforward live with the life of a Man-God; living no longer thyself but I alone living in thee . . . . . acting as acting not, but I alone in thee . . . . . because I wish to be all things to thee. Let thy motto be to love and suffer blindly; one single heart, one single love, one single God."

After hearing these words, Blessed Margaret Mary wrote in her blood this protestation of love:

"I, a poor and miserable nothing, protest to my God that I submit and sacrifice myself to Him for all that He asks of me, and that I immolate my heart unto the accomplishment of His good pleasure, reserving no interest save His greater glory and His pure love, to which I consecrate and yield all my being and my every moment.

"I am my Well-beloved's own for ever, His slave, His servant and His creature, since He is all mine, and His unworthy spouse am I, Sister Margaret Mary, dead to the world. All from God, and nothing from myself;

all to God, and nothing to myself; all for God, and nothing for myself."*

The Heart of Jesus a delightful garden, a book of life, a fathomless abyss.

Let us hear Blessed Margaret Mary herself recounting some of the graces with which Our Lord prevented her soul:

"Once," says she, "I felt my soul in a most painful agony, when Our Lord honouring we with a visit said to me: 'Enter, my daughter, into this delightful garden, to restore thy drooping soul.' I saw that this was His Sacred Heart, the variety of whose flowers was as acceptable as their beauty was admirable. After I had regarded them all, without daring to touch them, He said to me: 'Thou mayest gather them as thou wilt.' Casting myself at His feet I said to Him: 'O my sweet Saviour, I would have no other than Thyself, who art a bundle of myrrh to me that I would ever carry within the arms of my affections. 'Thou hast chosen well,' answered the divine Saviour; 'nothing but this myrrh can preserve its beauty and its odour. This life is its time and its season, and there is none of it in eternity where it changes its name.'" †

"One day whilst I was reading, my Well-beloved presented Himself before me, and said to me: 'I would make thee read in the book of life, wherein is contained the science of love.' And discovering to me His Heart, He made me read in it these words: 'My love reigns in suffering, it triumphs in humility, and it enjoys in

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* *Life by her Contemp.* I., pp. 38, 39. † *Ib.* p. 66.

unity'—and this impressed itself so strongly on my mind that I have never lost the remembrance of it." *

Our Lord further told her "to regard the opening of His sacred side, which is an abyss wide and deep beyond measurement, because formed by the dart of love. There those who love Him will find two lives, one for the soul the other for the heart. The soul finds there the spring of living waters, to purify itself, and at the same time to receive the life of grace which sin had taken from it. The heart finds there a furnace of love, which makes it no longer able to live save with a life of love. The soul is sanctified in it, and in it is the heart consumed, and as its opening is very narrow there is need to be little and divested of every thing in order to be able to enter."†

A Day in the Heart of Jesus.

We can gather from various parts of the writings of Blessed Margaret Mary the following method of passing our day in the Heart of Jesus.

"When you awake you shall enter into the Sacred Heart and shall consecrate to It your body, your soul, your heart and all that you are, to be employed solely for Its love and glory.

"Choose the Heart of Our Lord as a sacred oratory for your prayers and all spiritual occupations, that they may thus be acceptable to God; loving God by the love of His divine Heart, adoring by Its adorations, praising by Its praises, working by its operations, and willing by Its will.

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* *Life by her Contemp.* I., p. 65. † *Ib.*, p. 51.

"To hear holy Mass you shall unite yourselves to the intentions of this sweetest Heart, beseeching It to apply those merits according to Its designs concerning you.

"The same for Confession and Communion—in which you shall offer the dispositions of this Sacred Heart to supply for those which are wanting in you.

"When you make a genuflection before the Blessed Sacrament, thinking of those which were made before him in derision during his Passion, you shall say: 'May everything bend before Thee, O greatness of my God supremely abased in the Host! May all hearts love Thee, all intelligences adore Thee, all wills submit to Thee.' Often send your heart by your good Angel to render homage to that of Jesus in the Holy Sacrament.

"When you go to your refection you shall unite it with that divine nourishment with which our souls are sustained in the Holy Encharist, asking Jesus that this nourishment which you are about to take for love of Him and out of obedience may be to you a spiritual Communion, by which His purity may incorporate itself with your intentions, His grace with your soul, and His love with your heart, that you may never be able to cease from loving Him.

"When you go to recreation take care to give it to the Sacred Heart of Our Lord, by speaking of Him, consecrating all your words to that divine Word in order that He may not permit you to say any which are not for His glory.

"You will unite your silence with that which He preserves in the Blessed Sacrament, cutting off all words that would be to your own credit or would displease your

neighbour, putting down all reflections of self-love and vanity.

"When you suffer something, rejoice at it, and unite it with that which this Sacred Heart has suffered and still suffers in the Blessed Sacrament.

"When you feel yourselves attacked by any movement contrary to pure love, carry it to this divine Heart, that it may be consumed there and that you may get humility in exchange; and the like with all other passions or defects.

"When you have committed faults you must go and take from out his divine Heart the virtue contrary to your fault, to offer to the Eternal Father, asking It to put you back into favour with Him; and you must do the same when you see others commit a fault.

"Take as your aspiration in all sorts of events—'Thy will be done,' and then, 'I give myself entirely to Thee.'

"In the evening you will put into this adorable Heart all that you have done during the day in order that It may purify whatever there is of impure and imperfect in your actions.

"In order to take your rest in security you shall enter into the Holy of Holies of the most loving Heart of Jesus, within which you shall lock yourself with the key of an absolute abandonment of self to Its care." *

Offering of Self to the divine Heart of Jesus.

"O Sacred Heart, I give and consecrate myself wholly to Thee; my heart, my understanding, my memory and

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* *Instructions.* II., pp. 434, 435, 449, 456.

my will; in order that all I may do and suffer may be entirely for Thy love and glory, that all I shall see and hear may lead me to love Thee, that all my words may be so many acts of adoration, of love and of praise of Thy sovereignty, and that the movements of my lips may be so many acts of contrition for all sins committed and all good omitted: and I beg Thee, O Heart of love, that I may draw Thee to myself as often as I draw in my breath, and as often as I breathe it out so often may I offer Thee to Thy Eternal Father, to pay Him what I owe Him.

"O Heart full of goodness, hear and grant my prayer. O Sacred Heart, to which I belong, on which I depend, and by which I live, inflame me, take possession of me and transform me entirely into Thyself. Grant that all my steps may be taken in order to reach Thee, and that all my movements and unrest may be to unite myself to Thee, protesting that I would rather suffer a thousand deaths than separate myself from Thee or commit any infidelity in Thy regard." *

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* *Little Book of Prayers.* II., p. 502.

2nd Day.

Our Lord discovers to all men the infinite riches of his Sacred Heart by means of the Blessed Margaret Mary.

BLESSED Margaret Mary being one day before the Blessed Sacrament received a very special grace which she thus relates:

"I found myself all enwrapt in this sweet presence, and so mightily that I forgot myself and the place where I was, and abandoned myself to the divine Spirit, yielding my heart to the power of His love. He made me repose for a long time on His divine breast, where He discovered to me the wonders of His love and the unutterable secrets of His divine Heart which up to that time He had kept hidden from me. He opened It to me for the first time, but in a manner so decided and sensible that the effects of this grace no longer left me room for doubt, though I am afraid of making a mistake in whatever I say about it. Thus did it happen:—'My divine Heart,' He said to me, 'has so passionate a love for men, and for thee in particular, that no longer able to contain the flames of Its ardent charity, It must pour them abroad by thy means, and must manifest Itself to them to enrich them with those precious treasures which I discover to thee, and which contain the sanctifying and saving graces necessary to withdraw them from the abyss of perdition. I have chosen thee, as an abyss of unworthiness and of ignorance, for the accomplishment

of this great design, in order that all may be done by Me.'

"Then He asked me for my heart which I begged Him to take. He did so, and placed it in His adorable Heart, in which He let me see it as a little atom which was consumed in this burning fire; withdrawing it thence as a burning flame in the form of a heart, He put it back in its place, saying to me: 'here, my dearly-beloved, is a precious pledge of My love, which encloses within thy side a little spark of its divine flames, to be as thy heart, and to consume thee till the last moment of thy life. . . . . If up to this thou hast only taken the name of My slave, I give thee that of well-beloved disciple of My Heart.'

"This grace was renewed to me every first Friday of the month in the following manner. This Sacred Heart was represented to me as a sun, shining with a dazzling light, its burning rays falling directly upon my heart, which I felt at first to be inflamed with so fiery an ardour that I seemed to be about to be reduced to ashes. It was particularly at this time that my divine Master taught me what He wanted from me, and discovered to me the secrets of that most sweet Heart." *

The Seraphim form with her the first Association in honour of the Sacred Heart.

On another occasion she received a particular grace which she thus relates: "Once whilst the hemp-dressing was going on in the community, I withdrew into a little yard, near the Blessed Sacrament, where doing my work on my knees I first felt myself wholly recollected

* *Life by her Contemp.* I., p. 74.

interiorly and exteriorly, and there was at the same time represented to me the most sweet Heart of My adorable Jesus more brilliant than a sun. It was in the midst of the flames of His pure love, surrounded by Seraphim, who sang with an admirable concord:

L'amour triomphe, l'amour jouit,
L'amour du saint Cœur réjouit.*

And these blessed spirits inviting me to unite myself, with them in the praises of this divine Heart I dared not do so; but they corrected me for this, and told me that they had come to associate themselves with me in paying to It a continual homage of love of adoration and of praise, and that for this purpose they would take my place before the Blessed Sacrament, that I might be able to love It without intermission by their means and that they on their part would share in my love, suffering in my person as I should rejoice in theirs. And at the same time they wrote this our association in the Sacred Heart in letters of gold, and in the ineffaceable character of love. This grace lasted about two or three hours, and I have felt its effects all my life, as well in the helps which I have received from it as in the sweetness which I felt in it and which it ever produces in me. I remained overwhelmed with confusion. Henceforth in my prayers to the angels I always called them my divine associates." †

Blessed Margaret Mary, thus united to the heavenly spirits, felt the need of associating herself also in the Heart of Jesus to those faithful souls to whom she recommended this holy devotion. Various passages of her correspondence prove this.

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* Love triumphs, love enjoys, the love of the Sacred Heart gives delight.

† *Life by her Contemp.* I., p. 76.

made "one spirit" with God. "The end of the whole life and all the exercises of the sisters," says that first article of the *Directory*, which sums up the spirit of the Visitation, "is to unite them with God." A new spirit was already beginning to creep in, as S. Jane revealed to her Blessed daughter, * and the first triumph of the new manifestation of the Sacred Heart was the destruction of this false spirit, and the preservation of the true spirit of S. Francis for his Order and for the Church.

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* *Life by her Contemp.* p. 387. The opposition of some of the Sisters at Paray to the introduction of the devotion is a further proof. At the same time, their conduct has been much misrepresented, particularly by those who do not understand what is called the religious life. The community as a whole was a very regular one, and the majority had a high esteem for their saintly sister. Five only, out of its forty-four members, came near forfeiting the favour of their divine Master. Their fault must not be palliated, but it lay rather in an antecedent self-will, deafness to inspiration and a habit of criticism, than in the serious offences against charity, humility and obedience which they committed in a sudden access of indignation and mistaken zeal, under very extraordinary circumstances; offences, too, of which they immediately repented. Again the gravity of their sin consisted chiefly in its opposition to the spirit of their vows of perfection, and in the fact that the persons who committed it were consecrated to Almighty God. Judged by the ordinary standard of persons in the world, their faults would either not be recognised as such at all, or would seem almost justified by the circumstances, while their strong attachment to an excellent rule, and resistance to novelty, would seem a positive virtue. Blessed Margaret Mary's words of condemnation must be taken as literally exact, indeed she only repeated Christ's own words, but to understand their true sense we must compare them with her other utterances about sin, for instance, about her own almost imperceptible infidelities. It is not just to take a Saint's description of one sin without considering how the same Saint describes, or would describe, lesser and greater sins.

It was equally a sign of the divine action that when the Sacred Heart had been thus planted in the littleness and retirement of the Visitation, Father de la Colombière and the other Fathers of the great Society of Jesus should, through Blessed Margaret Mary, be made its missionaries, and that their virtues, their zeal, their reputation and their opportunities should be used to spread the knowledge of It through the world.

A hundred other providences are to be found in the history of this devotion, as innumerable other excellences are to be found within itself. But enough has been said, and all indeed is said in saying that Christ wishes it. All should come back to this; the beauty in which He displays it, the magnificent promises by which He recommends it, must be taken only as stronger and stronger proofs of His blessed will. In the great movement of the ages of faith, to rescue from the impious Turks His Sepulchre and the Land made sacred by His presence, the motto and the war-cry of the soul-stirred peoples, was "God wills it." The devotion to the Sacred Heart is the New Crusade, in ages of unfaith, against deadlier enemies of Christ and His Church than ever Turks were, and the same thought should be in our minds, the same motive in our hearts, the same inscription on our banners—"God wills it."

WEOBLEY.

Feast of the Invention of the Cross, 1890.

MONTH

OF THE

SACRED HEART.

Opening of the Month of the Sacred Heart.

Eve of 1st day of June.

Blessed Margaret Mary receives from Our Lord the mission of teaching us to love His Adorable Heart.

OUR Lord on one occasion said these words to Blessed Margaret Mary: "I desire that thou serve as My instrument to draw hearts to My love." "I cannot understand, O my God," said she, "how this can be." He answered: "By My almighty power, which made all things of nothing. Never forget thy nothingness, nor that thou art the victim of my Heart, and must ever be prepared to be immolated for charity. Therefore shall my love never be inactive in thee, but shall be ever causing thee to do and to suffer, whilst thou shalt no more expect what thou dost to be put down to thy credit than a tool used by the master claims the credit of the work which is done.

"But, as I have promised thee, thou shalt possess in exchange the treasures of My Heart, and I give

thee leave to dispose of them at thy choice to those who are worthy . . . I make thee heiress of my Heart and all its treasures for time and eternity, permitting thee to use them according to thy desires; and I promise thee that thou shalt never fail of assistance till My heart fails in power." *

"Thou must not keep these graces to thyself, nor be sparing in the distribution of them to others, for I have willed to use thy heart as a channel for conveying them according to my designs into souls, many of whom have by this means been saved from the abyss of perdition, as I will show thee hereafter." †

Blessed Margaret Mary when calling to mind these graces wrote: "When Our Lord gave me a particular engagement to the love of His Sacred Heart, He showed me at the same time how much I was to suffer for this same love, and how the graces which He would give me were not so much for myself as for those whom He would send me. To these I was simply to give the answers which He would put into my mind, and He himself would add the unction of His grace, by which He would draw many souls to His love." ‡

Marvellous contest between Jesus and His spouse.

It had required all the divine authority to make Blessed Margaret Mary accept the sublime mission which she was called to fulfil. "Alas! my God," she cried, "I feel my weakness; I fear that I shall betray Thee, and that Thy gifts are not secure with me. §

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* *Life by her Contemporaries.* pp. 125, 129. † *Ibid.* p. 9.
‡ *Letter* lvi., to Mother de Saumaise. § *Life by herself.* p. 321.

O my only love, why dost Thou not leave me in the common path of the daughters of Sainte-Marie ?* Hast Thou brought me into this house to ruin me? Give these precious graces to those cherished souls who will better correspond with them, and will honour Thee more than I do, since I do nothing but resist. I want solely Thy cross and Thy love; these are enough to make me a good religious, which is my one desire.

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* *Little Book of Prayers.* II., p. 478.

1st Day.

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Let us hear Blessed Margaret Mary herself recounting some of the graces with which Our Lord prevented her soul:

"Once," says she, "I felt my soul in a most painful agony, when Our Lord honouring we with a visit said to me: 'Enter, my daughter, into this delightful garden, to restore thy drooping soul.' I saw that this was His Sacred Heart, the variety of whose flowers was as acceptable as their beauty was admirable. After I had regarded them all, without daring to touch them, He said to me: 'Thou mayest gather them as thou wilt.' Casting myself at His feet I said to Him: 'O my sweet Saviour, I would have no other than Thyself, who art a bundle of myrrh to me that I would ever carry within the arms of my affections. 'Thou hast chosen well,' answered the divine Saviour; 'nothing but this myrrh can preserve its beauty and its odour. This life is its time and its season, and there is none of it in eternity where it changes its name.'" †

"One day whilst I was reading, my Well-beloved presented Himself before me, and said to me: 'I would make thee read in the book of life, wherein is contained the science of love.' And discovering to me His Heart, He made me read in it these words: 'My love reigns in suffering, it triumphs in humility, and it enjoys in

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* *Life by her Contemp.* I., pp. 38, 39. † *Ib.* p. 66.

unity'—and this impressed itself so strongly on my mind that I have never lost the remembrance of it." *

Our Lord further told her "to regard the opening of His sacred side, which is an abyss wide and deep beyond measurement, because formed by the dart of love. There those who love Him will find two lives, one for the soul the other for the heart. The soul finds there the spring of living waters, to purify itself, and at the same time to receive the life of grace which sin had taken from it. The heart finds there a furnace of love, which makes it no longer able to live save with a life of love. The soul is sanctified in it, and in it is the heart consumed, and as its opening is very narrow there is need to be little and divested of every thing in order to be able to enter."†

A Day in the Heart of Jesus.

We can gather from various parts of the writings of Blessed Margaret Mary the following method of passing our day in the Heart of Jesus.

"When you awake you shall enter into the Sacred Heart and shall consecrate to It your body, your soul, your heart and all that you are, to be employed solely for Its love and glory.

"Choose the Heart of Our Lord as a sacred oratory for your prayers and all spiritual occupations, that they may thus be acceptable to God; loving God by the love of His divine Heart, adoring by Its adorations, praising by Its praises, working by its operations, and willing by Its will.

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* *Life by her Contemp.* I., p. 65. † *Ib.*, p. 51.

"To hear holy Mass you shall unite yourselves to the intentions of this sweetest Heart, beseeching It to apply those merits according to Its designs concerning you.

"The same for Confession and Communion—in which you shall offer the dispositions of this Sacred Heart to supply for those which are wanting in you.

"When you make a genuflection before the Blessed Sacrament, thinking of those which were made before him in derision during his Passion, you shall say: 'May everything bend before Thee, O greatness of my God supremely abased in the Host! May all hearts love Thee, all intelligences adore Thee, all wills submit to Thee.' Often send your heart by your good Angel to render homage to that of Jesus in the Holy Sacrament.

"When you go to your refection you shall unite it with that divine nourishment with which our souls are sustained in the Holy Encharist, asking Jesus that this nourishment which you are about to take for love of Him and out of obedience may be to you a spiritual Communion, by which His purity may incorporate itself with your intentions, His grace with your soul, and His love with your heart, that you may never be able to cease from loving Him.

"When you go to recreation take care to give it to the Sacred Heart of Our Lord, by speaking of Him, consecrating all your words to that divine Word in order that He may not permit you to say any which are not for His glory.

"You will unite your silence with that which He preserves in the Blessed Sacrament, cutting off all words that would be to your own credit or would displease your

neighbour, putting down all reflections of self-love and vanity.

"When you suffer something, rejoice at it, and unite it with that which this Sacred Heart has suffered and still suffers in the Blessed Sacrament.

"When you feel yourselves attacked by any movement contrary to pure love, carry it to this divine Heart, that it may be consumed there and that you may get humility in exchange; and the like with all other passions or defects.

"When you have committed faults you must go and take from out his divine Heart the virtue contrary to your fault, to offer to the Eternal Father, asking It to put you back into favour with Him; and you must do the same when you see others commit a fault.

"Take as your aspiration in all sorts of events—'Thy will be done,' and then, 'I give myself entirely to Thee.'

"In the evening you will put into this adorable Heart all that you have done during the day in order that It may purify whatever there is of impure and imperfect in your actions.

"In order to take your rest in security you shall enter into the Holy of Holies of the most loving Heart of Jesus, within which you shall lock yourself with the key of an absolute abandonment of self to Its care." *

Offering of Self to the divine Heart of Jesus.

"O Sacred Heart, I give and consecrate myself wholly to Thee; my heart, my understanding, my memory and

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* *Instructions.* II., pp. 434, 435, 449, 456.

my will ; in order that all I may do and suffer may be entirely for Thy love and glory, that all I shall see and hear may lead me to love Thee, that all my words may be so many acts of adoration, of love and of praise of Thy sovereignty, and that the movements of my lips may be so many acts of contrition for all sins committed and all good omitted : and I beg Thee, O Heart of love, that I may draw Thee to myself as often as I draw in my breath, and as often as I breathe it out so often may I offer Thee to Thy Eternal Father, to pay Him what I owe Him.

" O Heart full of goodness, hear and grant my prayer. O Sacred Heart, to which I belong, on which I depend, and by which I live, inflame me, take possession of me and transform me entirely into Thyself. Grant that all my steps may be taken in order to reach Thee, and that all my movements and unrest may be to unite myself to Thee, protesting that I would rather suffer a thousand deaths than separate myself from Thee or commit any infidelity in Thy regard." *

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* *Little Book of Prayers.* II., p. 502.

2nd Day.

Our Lord discovers to all men the infinite riches of his Sacred Heart by means of the Blessed Margaret Mary.

BLESSED Margaret Mary being one day before the Blessed Sacrament received a very special grace which she thus relates:

"I found myself all enwrapt in this sweet presence, and so mightily that I forgot myself and the place where I was, and abandoned myself to the divine Spirit, yielding my heart to the power of His love. He made me repose for a long time on His divine breast, where He discovered to me the wonders of His love and the unutterable secrets of His divine Heart which up to that time He had kept hidden from me. He opened It to me for the first time, but in a manner so decided and sensible that the effects of this grace no longer left me room for doubt, though I am afraid of making a mistake in whatever I say about it. Thus did it happen:—'My divine Heart,' He said to me, 'has so passionate a love for men, and for thee in particular, that no longer able to contain the flames of Its ardent charity, It must pour them abroad by thy means, and must manifest Itself to them to enrich them with those precious treasures which I discover to thee, and which contain the sanctifying and saving graces necessary to withdraw them from the abyss of perdition. I have chosen thee, as an abyss of unworthiness and of ignorance, for the accomplishment

of this great design, in order that all may be done by Me.'

"Then He asked me for my heart which I begged Him to take. He did so, and placed it in His adorable Heart, in which He let me see it as a little atom which was consumed in this burning fire; withdrawing it thence as a burning flame in the form of a heart, He put it back in its place, saying to me: 'here, my dearly-beloved, is a precious pledge of My love, which encloses within thy side a little spark of its divine flames, to be as thy heart, and to consume thee till the last moment of thy life. . . . . If up to this thou hast only taken the name of My slave, I give thee that of well-beloved disciple of My Heart.'

"This grace was renewed to me every first Friday of the month in the following manner. This Sacred Heart was represented to me as a sun, shining with a dazzling light, its burning rays falling directly upon my heart, which I felt at first to be inflamed with so fiery an ardour that I seemed to be about to be reduced to ashes. It was particularly at this time that my divine Master taught me what He wanted from me, and discovered to me the secrets of that most sweet Heart." *

The Seraphim form with her the first Association in honour of the Sacred Heart.

On another occasion she received a particular grace which she thus relates: "Once whilst the hemp-dressing was going on in the community, I withdrew into a little yard, near the Blessed Sacrament, where doing my work on my knees I first felt myself wholly recollected

* *Life by her Contemp.* I., p. 74.

interiorly and exteriorly, and there was at the same time represented to me the most sweet Heart of My adorable Jesus more brilliant than a sun. It was in the midst of the flames of His pure love, surrounded by Seraphim, who sang with an admirable concord:

L'amour triomphe, l'amour jouit,
L'amour du saint Cœur réjouit.*

And these blessed spirits inviting me to unite myself, with them in the praises of this divine Heart I dared not do so; but they corrected me for this, and told me that they had come to associate themselves with me in paying to It a continual homage of love of adoration and of praise, and that for this purpose they would take my place before the Blessed Sacrament, that I might be able to love It without intermission by their means and that they on their part would share in my love, suffering in my person as I should rejoice in theirs. And at the same time they wrote this our association in the Sacred Heart in letters of gold, and in the ineffaceable character of love. This grace lasted about two or three hours, and I have felt its effects all my life, as well in the helps which I have received from it as in the sweetness which I felt in it and which it ever produces in me. I remained overwhelmed with confusion. Henceforth in my prayers to the angels I always called them my divine associates." †

Blessed Margaret Mary, thus united to the heavenly spirits, felt the need of associating herself also in the Heart of Jesus to those faithful souls to whom she recommended this holy devotion. Various passages of her correspondence prove this.

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* Love triumphs, love enjoys, the love of the Sacred Heart gives delight.

† *Life by her Contemp.* I., p. 76.

"God can when He wills," she wrote, "draw His glory from our least actions, as I hope He will do from the desire which he gives you that we should enter into a particular communication of goods. I must tell you that I do none myself, but God is so good that He lets us appropriate the treasure of the true poor, the Sacred Heart of Jesus, whose celestial abundance can unceasingly content our craving indigence. It is of this priceless good that we must make our communication, putting in this Sacred Heart all the good that we can do by His grace, to exchange it for His which we will offer to the Eternal Father in place of ours. Behold our true society and our delicious retreat, this adorable Heart, where we will live sheltered from all the tempests of life." *

"You are right indeed to desire union with the holy souls who honour this divine Heart, of whom there is a good number. . . . . .

"I venture to promise myself that you will remember me in the Sacred Heart of Our Lord Jesus Christ, to which I would have all others consecrated. Let us try to draw as many as we can to our little association; let us ask of Him this grace."

Thus began to be formed the first associations in honour of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, while Blessed Margaret Mary, in her profound humility, esteemed herself unworthy to share in them.

"My Saviour would not let me be lost," said she, "and so He Himself united me in spiritual goods with his most faithful friends, that they may make up by their love and fidelity for the injuries which I do Him.

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* *Let.* iv., to Sr. de Soudeilles.

But I frankly tell you that if these good souls knew me to be as wicked as I am they would never consent to this union, for fear lest I should draw down upon them the indignation and anger of that loving Heart, without which life would be insupportable to me." *

Power of united prayer in honour of the Sacred Heart of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

"Let us unceasingly ask this most sweet Heart to make itself known and loved, and to pour forth its graces on all who have recourse to it for help in public calamities." †

"How mighty is this divine Heart to appease the anger of Divine justice, irritated by the multitude of our sins, which draw down all the calamities with which we find ourselves afflicted! But we must pray in order that no worse may befal us. United prayer has a great power with this Sacred Heart, which meets and turns aside the rigours of divine justice, placing Itself between this justice and sinners in order to obtain mercy." ‡

"Ah! how great is the happiness of those who help to establish the reign of the Sacred Heart, for they thus obtain the friendship and eternal benedictions of this most sweet Heart of Jesus, and a powerful protector for our country! A less powerful one would have been insufficient for averting the bitterness and severity of God's just anger against the many crimes which are committed. But I hope that this divine Heart will make Itself an abundant and inexhaustible source of mercy and grace.

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* *Let.* cvi., to Sr. Joly. † *Let.* cxiv., to the Same.
‡ *Let.* cx., to Mother de Saumaise.

Consecration to the Sacred Heart of Our Lord Jesus Christ, to be recited in public.

" O Lord Jesus, holy and sweet love of our souls, who hast promised that where two or three are gathered together in Thy name there Thou wilt be in the midst of them, here are our hearts, O divine and most amiable Jesus, united with one accord to adore, praise, bless and please Thy most holy and Sacred Heart, to which we unitedly dedicate and consecrate ours for time and eternity; renouncing for ever all movements and affections of love which are not in the love and affection of Thine adorable Heart; desiring that all the desires wishes and aspirations of ours may be ever conformed to the good pleasure of Thine, which we desire to content as much as we have the power to do. But as we are unable to do any good of ourselves, we beseech Thee, O most adorable Jesus, we beseech Thee by the infinite goodness and sweetness of thy Sacred Heart, to sustain our hearts and to confirm them in the resolution which Thou hast made them form for Thy love and service, in order that nothing may ever separate and disjoin us from Thee, but that we may be faithful and constant in this resolution, sacrificing to the love of Thy Sacred Heart all that can give vain pleasure to ours, all that can uselessly engage them in the pursuit of things here below, where we confess that all is vanity and affliction of spirit save to love and serve Thee, only Thee, my divine and most amiable Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who art to be blest, loved and glorified for ever." *

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* *Little Book of Prayers.* II. p. 477.

3rd Day.

Our Lord gives his Heart to men as a last effort of his love, and asks that the picture of it be honoured in public.

THE following is one of the chief favours accorded by Our Lord to Blessed Margaret Mary as to the mission which He willed to confide to her We relate it as she herself has told it under an express order of obedience.

"One St. John the Evangelist's day, after having received from my divine Saviour a grace almost resembling that which the Beloved Disciple received on the night of the Last Supper, the divine Heart was represented to me as on a throne of fire and flames, casting its rays on all sides, more brilliant than the sun and transparent as crystal. The wound which It received on the cross was clearly visible in It; there was a crown of thorns round this divine Heart and a cross above. My divine Master made me understand that these instruments of His Passion signified that the immense love which He had for men was the source of all His sufferings, that from the first moment of His Incarnation all His torments were present to Him, and that it was from this first moment that the cross was as it were planted in His Heart; that He accepted from that time all the pains and humiliations that His sacred Humanity was to suffer during the course of His mortal life, and even the outrages to which His love

for men exposed Him up to the end of the world in the holy Sacrament. He then told me that the great desire which He had of being perfectly loved by men had made Him form the design of manifesting to them His Heart, and of giving them in these last ages this last effort of His love, by proposing to them an object and a means so fit to make them love Him, and love Him solidly, opening to them all the treasures of love, of mercy, of grace, of sanctification which It contains, in order that all those who might wish to give Him and to procure for Him all the honour and love which they could, might be enriched to profusion with the divine treasures of which It is the abundant and inexhaustible source.

"He further assured me that he took a singular pleasure in being honoured under the figure of this Heart of flesh, the picture of which He wished to be exposed publicly, in order, He added, to touch the insensible heart of men; and He promised me that He would pour forth abundantly over all those who should honour It, all the treasures of grace with which It is filled. Wherever this picture shall be exposed in order to be singularly honoured, thither will it draw the abundance of every sort of blessing. . . . .

"Then this divine Saviour spoke to me nearly in these words: 'Such my daughter, is the design for which I have chosen thee; it is for this that I have given thee such great graces, and that I have taken so particular a care of thee from thy cradle. I have made Myself thy Master and thy Director solely to dispose thee to receive all these great graces, amongst which thou must count as one of the most signal that

by which I discover and give to thee the greatest of all treasures, in showing and at the same time giving to thee My Heart.' Then prostrating myself with my face to the ground, it was impossible for me to express my feelings otherwise than by my silence, which I soon interrupted with my tears and sighs." *

Memories.

After an interval of fourteen years, the remembrance of this grace inspired Blessed Margaret Mary with these sublime words:

"The day of the feast of the Beloved Disciple of our dearly Beloved, it came back to my mind that it was on that day that this divine Spouse did me the incomprehensible grace, of which I am all unworthy, of making me recline on His bosom with His Beloved Disciple, and of giving me His Heart, His cross and His love: His Heart to be my refuge, my succour and my heaven of rest in the tempests of this stormy sea; His cross to be my throne of glory, in which I must not only glory but also delight, since there is nothing good for me but Jesus, the cross and love; and He gave me his love to purify me, to consume me, and to transform me wholly into Himself. But Oh! my God, how ill have I corresponded with graces so great, which ought to sanctify me, and will perhaps only serve to condemn me." †

Another time Blessed Margaret Mary wrote:

". . . The Sacred Heart of Our Lord Jesus Christ does me continual favours, and I only repay It with

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* *Let.* cxxvi., to Fr. Rolin. † *Let.* xciii., to Mother de Saumaise

ingratitude. He favoured me with a visit which was extremely full of grace to me in the good impressions which it left in my Heart. He then reiterated to me that the pleasure which He takes in being loved, known and honoured by His creatures is so great that, if I am not mistaken, He promised me that all those who are devoted to His Heart and dedicated to It shall never perish; and that as He is the source of all blessings He will pour them forth abundantly in all places where the representation of His divine Heart shall be placed and honoured; that He will reconcile divided families, and will protect and assist those families which are in distress and appeal to It with confidence; that He will spread the sweet unction of His charity over all communities who honour It and place themselves under Its special protection; that He will turn away from them all the strokes of His divine justice, in order to restore them to grace when they have fallen from it."*

The practice of devotion to the Sacred Heart according to Blessed Margaret Mary.

"I will simply tell you" she wrote, "as a true friend in the adorable Heart of Our Lord Jesus Christ, that when I am praying to It for you this thought comes to me, that if you wish to live for Him alone and to arrive at perfection, you must make to His Sacred Heart an entire sacrifice of yourself and of all that depends on you, without reserve, so as to will nothing save by the will of His most Sweet Heart, to have

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* *Let.* xxxiii., to Mother Greyfié.

no affection for anything save by Its affections, acting only by the lights which It gives, undertaking nothing without first asking Its counsel and assistance, giving to It the glory of everything, and even giving thanks to It in the failure of our good undertakings as in the success, ever remaining content, without disturbing ourselves about anything; for provided that this divine Heart is satisfied, loved and glorified, this ought to be enough for us. And if you want to be of the number of Its friends, you must offer this sacrifice of yourself some first Friday of the month after Holy Communion, which you will approach for this intention, consecrating yourself wholly to It, in order to procure for It all the love, honour and glory in your power; and all this in the way in which It will inspire you. Afterwards you will regard yourself simply as belonging to the adorable Heart of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and dependent on It, having recourse to It in all your necessities, and establishing your abode therein as far as you can. It will repair what may be imperfect in your actions, and will sanctify those which are good, if you unite yourselves in everything to Its designs." *

". . . We must try with all our power to enter into this adorable Heart, making ourselves very little by the humble acknowledgment of our nothingness, in which we must keep ourselves ever abased. We must further establish for ourselves a kingdom of peace in this Sacred Heart. This will be by conformity with Its good pleasure, to which we must so fully abandon ourselves that our chiefest care must be to cut off all

* *Let.* xxvi., to Mother de Soudeilles.

that can be any obstacle to It; letting It do in us, with us and for us according to Its wish, that It may perfect us in Its own way and shape us according to Its liking. And in order to keep ourselves within this divine Heart for ever, we must love It with a love of preference, as the one thing necessary to our hearts, which we must gently lead to the contempt and forgetfulness of all the rest." *

Act of love to the Sacred Heart.

"O Heart inflamed and living by love! O sanctuary of the Divinity, temple of the sovereign Majesty, altar of the divine charity, Heart which dost burn with love both for God and for me, I adore Thee, I love Thee, I am lost in love and respect before Thee. I unite myself to Thy holy dispositions; I wish, I wish indeed, to burn with Thy fire and live with Thy life. What joy have I to see Thee blessed and pleased! How do I share in Thy graces, Thy sorrows and Thy glory, and with how glad a heart would I choose to die and suffer rather than offend Thee. O my heart, thou must no longer act save by the movements of the Sacred Heart of Jesus; thou must silently die before Him to all that is human and of nature. O divine Heart, I unite myself to Thee and lose myself in Thee. I would live no longer save of Thee, by Thee and for Thee. So shall all my occupation be to remain in silence and in respect, annihilated before Thee like a burning lamp which is consumed before the Blessed Sacrament. To love, to suffer, and to die! Amen." †

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* *Let.* lxxxix., to Sr. de la Barge. † *Ancient* Mss. II., p. 498.

4th Day.

Our Lord asks for the institution of a feast in honour of His Heart which has loved men so tenderly.

"BEING before the Blessed Sacrament one day of its Octave, says Blessed Margaret Mary, I received from my God excessive graces of His love. And feeling myself touched with the desire of making some return, and of rendering to Him love for love, He said to me: 'Thou canst not make me a better return than by doing what I have already so often demanded from Thee.' And discovering to me His Heart, He said: 'Behold this Heart, which has so loved men that It has spared nothing, even to the exhausting and spending Itself in order to testify to them Its love; while as an acknowledgment I get back for the most part nothing but the ingratitude, contempt, irreverences, sacrileges and coldness which they show me in this Sacrament of love. But what I still more feel is that it is hearts which are consecrated to me who act thus. Therefore I ask of thee that the first Friday after the octave of the Blessed Sacrament be kept as a particular feast in honour of My Heart, by communicating on that day, and making to it an act of reparation of honour, in order to atone for the indignities which It has received while It was exposed on the altars. I promise thee moreover that My Heart will dilate Itself to spread the quickening impulses of

Its love abundantly over those who shall pay It this honour and who shall get others to do the same.

"But, my Lord, to whom dost Thou speak?" said she. "To a frail creature, and to a sinner so unworthy that her worthlessness would even be capable of hindering the accomplishment of Thy design. Thou hast so many generous souls to execute it!"

"What!" said this divine Saviour to her, "knowest thou not that I make use of the feeblest things to confound the strong, and that it is ordinarily on those who are more little and poor in spirit that my power displays itself with the greatest glory, to the end that they may attribute nothing to themselves"? *

First honours paid to the Sacred Heart of Our Lord at Paray-le-Monial.

In 1685, Blessed Margaret Mary, appointed mistress of novices, had the consolation of being able to begin the *cultus* of the Sacred Heart. She thus relates what happened:

"I had not yet found a means of bringing forward the devotion of the Sacred Heart, which was all that I longed for. The first occasion which His goodness furnished me was this. The feast of St. Margaret falling on a Friday, I asked our novices, of whom I had charge at that time, to pay all the little honours which they intended to show me for my feast to the Sacred Heart of Our Lord Jesus Christ. This they did with great willingness, erecting a little altar on which they placed a small paper picture drawn with a pen, to which

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* *Life by her Contemp.* I., p. 93.

we strove to pay all the homage which this divine Heart inspired us to show." *

"This dear directress," we read in the Life by her contemporaries, † "was the first to consecrate herself to the divine Heart, and directed the novices to do the same, telling them to write each one her form of consecration according to her attraction and as Our Lord inspired her.

"She spent the whole day with the sisters of the noviciate in honouring It, having asked them if they were not very willing to give her this pleasure, which was not to be without reward. Then she knelt before this little altar to make with them a reparation of honour, and many prayers which she had composed in honour of that adorable Heart, which she pronounced with the ardour of a seraph, remaining afterwards for some space of time in silence, and in so great a self-abasement that she inspired with faith, love and devotion those who were the most wanting in them.

"She ended by thanking them, saying to them several times, 'You could not, my dear sisters, do me a dearer pleasure than to have paid your homage to this divine Heart by consecrating yourselves wholly to It. How happy are you in that He has deigned to make use of you in order to begin this devotion! You must continue to pray that He may reign in all hearts. O! what a joy for me that the adorable Heart of my divine Master should be known, loved and glorified! Yes, my dear sisters, it is the greatest consolation that I can have in my life, nothing being able to give me any pleasure save

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* *Life by herself.* II., p. 356. † I., p. 208, and fol.

to see It reign. Let us love It then, but let us love It without reserve, without exception; let us give all and sacrifice all to have this happiness, and we shall have all in possessing this divine Heart of Jesus, which is willing to be all things to the heart which loves It—but this love lies only in suffering for It.'

"'Ah! my dear sisters,' she said further to them, 'all our occupation is to serve and know God. Your portion is to love His Heart.' What a happiness to be able to say—Yes, I shall love and praise Him throughout an eternity! But for this we must love Him constantly and equally, in afflictions as in consolations, and in all the accidents of life."

Zeal of Blessed Margaret Mary for the glory of the Sacred Heart.

". . . You do not know how much I feel myself pressed to honour the Sacred Heart of Our Lord Jesus Christ! It seems to me that life is given me for nothing at all but this.

". . . My desire is solely to procure glory for the Sacred Heart. How happy should I think myself if before dying I could do something to please It!

". . . I am insensible to everything else; but It so urges me to love It and make It loved, that if I had to suffer all labours, trials and pains for this end they would all be joys to me for Its sake; and there is no suffering to which I would not give myself up with pleasure.

". . . There is sometimes enkindled in my heart so strong a desire to make It reign in all hearts, that there seems to be nothing that I would not do and suffer for

this; even the pains of hell, without sin, would be sweet to me. . . Provided that I love Him and that He reign it is enough. . . My poor little heart is insensible to all but this; desires only, breathes only, to see that of our good Master reign in all hearts that are capable of loving It. . . . . All my prayers tend only to this. I never cease applying to this sole interest of the glory of this Sacred Heart all the good that I can do or that is done for me.

"May love, glory and praise be ever given to the Heart—all love, all loving, and all worthy of love—of our adorable Saviour, for all the good which It will produce and work in souls by the establishment of the reign of His pure love in hearts of good will." *

Form of consecration to the Sacred Heart, proposed by Blessed Margaret Mary.

"I, N.N., give and consecrate to the Sacred Heart of Our Lord Jesus Christ my person and my life, my actions, troubles and sufferings, wishing no longer to make use of any part of my being except to honour, love and glorify It. This is my irrevocable will, to belong entirely to It, and to do all for love of It, renouncing with all my strength all that could displease It. I take Thee then, O Sacred Heart, as the sole object of my love, the protector of my life, the assurance of my salvation, the remedy of my frailty and inconstancy, the repairer of all the defects of my life, and my assured refuge at the hour of my death. Be then, O Heart of goodness, my justification with God Thy Father, and avert from me the darts of His just

* *Letters* xxxiv., cvi., lxxvii., lvi., xcvii.

anger. O Heart of love, I place all my confidence in Thee, for while I fear everything from my malice and weakness I hope everything from Thy goodness. Consume then in me all that could displease or resist Thee; may thy pure love impress Thee so deeply on my heart that I may be unable ever to forget Thee, ever to be separated from Thee. I conjure Thee by all thy favours that my name may be inscribed in Thee, for I would make all my happiness and all my glory consist in living and dying as Thy slave. Amen." *

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* *Let.* xlix., to Sr. de la Barge.

5th Day.

Adorable Titles by which the Sacred Heart of Our Lord Jesus Christ irresistibly attracts our heart.

"OUR Lord has given me to know that His Heart is *the Holy of Holies, the Holy of Love;* that He wanted It now known as the *Mediator* between God and men, for It is all-powerful to make peace for them, by turning away the chastisements which our sins have deserved, and obtaining us mercy.

"It is a *fortress* and *assured asylum* for those who want to take refuge there from the divine justice, whose wrath would overwhelm the sinners with their sins, on account of the great number which they commit, which awaken His just anger.

"It is *the throne of Mercy,* at which the most miserable are the most favourably received, provided that love offers them in the abyss of their misery.

"And if we are ungenerous, cold, impure, and imperfect, is It not a *burning Furnace,* in which we must be refined and purified like gold in the crucible, in order to be as a living victim to It, wholly immolated and sacrificed to Its adorable designs?

"This divine Heart is an *Abyss of all sorts of good,* in which we must lose ourselves, to relish no more the things of earth, an *Abyss of love,* in which is our dwelling and repose for evermore. It is an *inex-*

haustible source of mercy, of all sorts of delights; and the more one draws from it the more abundant it is; a *source of living water*, a copious spring of blessings and graces, the source inexhaustible of all the knowledge and charity of the Saints.

"It is a *hidden and infinite treasure*, which only seeks to manifest Itself to us, to pour out and distribute Itself in order to supply our poverty; it is *the treasure of heaven and earth.*

"It is a *sacred Oratory*, a *Paradise of peace and delights*, the *Altar of our sacrifice*, the *Sovereign Sacrificer*, the *one thing necessary to our hearts*, our *all in all;* that which would be as a *germ of eternal life* within us, our *Liberator* which will free us from the captivity of Satan; our *good Master*, teaching us to know and love Itself with all our souls, all our powers and strength; our *wise Pilot*, to whose care we must leave ourselves utterly, wishing no longer to concern ourselves with anything save to love and please It; our *delicious retreat*, in which we live sheltered from the storms of this life.

"Lastly, the Heart of Our Saviour is a *money beyond price*, stamped with the Divinity, in order that men may pay their debts with it, and with it may negociate the great affair of their eternal salvation." *

Sentiments of love and confidence.

I place all my hope and make my refuge in the merits of the Heart of my Lord Jesus Christ, who has gone so far as to make Himself my security, giving me a certain hope that He will pay and answer for me.

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* *Collection of Various Letters and Writings.* II., p. 68, &c.

"I find in the Sacred Heart of my Jesus all that is wanting to my indigence, because It is filled with all mercy. I have found no remedy surer in all my afflictions than the Sacred Heart of my adorable Jesus. It is there that I sleep without cares, and repose without disquiet. There is nothing hard or trying which is not softened by the Heart of Jesus, all full of love. The sick and the sinful find there a sure asylum, and remain there in safety. This divine and loving Heart is all my hope; It is my refuge; Its merits are my salvation, my life, my resurrection. Provided that Its mercy fail me not I am well endowed with merits; for the more mighty It is to save me so much is my assurance the greater. *

"I find myself so filled with its graces and favours that I cannot describe them. I seem to be a little drop of water in the ocean of the Sacred Heart of our divine Master."

Strong attractions by which Our Lord united to Himself the Heart of Blessed Margaret Mary.

The accounts of contemporaries tell us that while Blessed Margaret Mary was yet in the world Our Lord said to her once after Holy Communion that He was "the most beautiful, the most rich, the most powerful, the most perfect, and the most accomplished of all lovers. 'Know,' added He, 'that if thou art faithful to Me, I will not quit thee, and will be thy victory over all thine enemies. . . . If thou follow Me with constancy I will teach thee to know Me and will reveal Myself to thee.' Whilst saying this He impressed so deep a calm

* *Little Book of Prayers.* II.. p. 483.

on all her interior, that she resolved from that moment to die rather than change her design of being a religious."

On the day of her clothing "her divine Master made her see that He would take a new possession of His empire over her heart, and that she reciprocally must love Him with a love of preference. He told her that He would make her taste during her noviciate what was sweetest in the sweetnesses of His love. These were in fact so great that they put her beside herself. She often cried out, her heart all filled with God—'Oh! how lovely is the well-beloved of my soul! why can I not love Him?' And as if the divine Saviour had doubted of Her love, He asked of her several times, as of St. Peter, whether she loved Him. To which she could only reply—'Ah! Lord, Thou knowest how I desire to do so.'" *

Elevations of the soul to the Heart of Jesus.

"Hail, Heart of my Jesus, save me.
Hail, Heart of my Creator, make me perfect.
Hail, Heart of my Saviour, deliver me.
Hail, Heart of my Judge, pardon me,
Hail, Heart of my Father, govern me.
Hail, Heart of my Spouse, love me.
Hail, Heart of my Master, teach me.
Hail, Heart of my King, crown me.
Hail, Heart of my Benefactor, enrich me.
Hail, Heart of my Pastor, guard me.
Hail, Heart of my Brother, stay with me.
Hail, Heart of incomparable goodness, pardon me.
Hail, Most Loving Heart, inflame me.

* *Life by her Contemp.* I., pp. 20, 27, 34.

"O my Jesus and my sovereign good, I love Thee, not for the rewards which Thou promisest to those who love Thee, but purely for the love of Thyself. I love Thee above all things that can be loved, above all pleasures, and in fine above myself and all that is not Thee, protesting in presence of heaven and earth, that I will to live and die purely and simply in Thy holy love, and that if to love Thee thus I must be persecuted, tormented, put to death, I am most content to be so, and I will ever say with St. Paul: 'There is no creature which can separate me from the charity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ, which I love and will love eternally.'" *

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* *Little Book of Prayers.* II., pp. 475, 479.

6th Day.

Our Lord Wills that the Devotion to the Sacred Heart should Triumph amidst Contradictions by means of Gentleness and Love.

"THE Heart of our good Master desires from His creatures a love and homage given out of a free, loving and sincere will, without constraint or pretence. I am confident that He wishes to establish His kingdom only by the gentleness and sweetness of His love, and not by the rigours of His justice.

"The devotion to this Sacred Heart must not be forced, but it would insinuate itself into hearts by the sweet unction of Its charity, after the manner of oil, or rather of a precious balsam, which spread themselves and their fragrance slowly and gently, It is enough to make It known, and then to leave to this divine Heart the work of penetrating with the unction of Its grace the hearts which It has destined for Itself. Happy they who are of this number!

"All must be done gently and sweetly, though strongly and diligently, according to the means which It will supply to us. We must indeed pursue God's work without hesitating or growing weary under any contradiction that we may find in it, for He is strong and powerful enough to conquer and confound our enemies, but this divine Heart is nothing but sweetness, humility, and patience.

"Works which immediately concern God's glory are very different from those which belong to the world. In these there is required much action, but in those of God we must often be content to follow His inspiration, and then to let grace act and to follow its movements with all our power.

"God is above all. It often pleases Him to make use of the smallest and even of the most contemptible things for the execution of His greatest designs, in order both to blind and confound human reason, and to display His power, which can do all that He pleases, although He does not always do it. He refrains because He does not will to do violence to man's heart, but leaves it free, in order that it may be more duly rewarded or punished.

"Do not be terrified by all the contradictions which you will meet with in establishing the kingdom of this most sweet Heart . . . . difficulties are a surer mark that the thing comes from God, since His works are accomplished only under contradictions.

"It is Satan who arouses these, enraged as he is to see that by this salutary means he will lose many souls which he thought already his, and that it has already wrested souls from him, and will wrest many more, by the Almighty power of Him who at the time which He has determined will make all these oppositions and contradictions turn to His glory and the confusion of His enemies. Yea, He will use these contradictions as a solid foundation for the establishment of this holy devotion.

"Let us not afflict ourselves if we do not see at once realized our desires for the glory of this divine Heart, which permits this delay only from the pleasure which

It takes in seeing our ardour and eager longings increase, and again that the fervour of this sweet devotion may endure longer when He little by little grants what we ask. Although I acknowledge that He continually presses me to make Him known and loved, and I offer myself unceasingly to Him for this object, that He may immolate and sacrifice me as His victim. This is His whole desire and the good-pleasure of His love.

"Let us not fear the labours and sufferings which occur in this holy work; but rather let us think ourselves happy to suffer for so worthy a subject; yes, I say, all kinds of labours, contradictions, calumnies, and pains. For the more of these I find the more I am encouraged, and the better hope have I that all will succeed to the glory of this most sweet Heart, unto the salvation of many souls.

"We must love It, this sacred Heart, with all our strength and all our powers. Yes, we must love It, and It will establish Its empire, and will reign in spite of all Its enemies and their oppositions. It will make Itself the master and possessor of our hearts, for this is Its principal aim in this devotion, to convert souls to Its love. This Heart of love will reign despite Satan and his followers. These words transport me with joy and form my whole consolation." *

Blessed Margaret Mary sacrifices herself for the interests of the glory of the Sacred Heart.

"Once," she writes, "pressed with the desire of the increase of devotion to the Sacred Heart of my Saviour, in presence of the most holy Sacrament, there was shown

* *Letters* cx., liii., cxvii., cxiv.

me, if I am not mistaken, the ardour with which the Seraphim burn so joyously, and I heard these words: 'Wouldst thou not rather rejoice with them, than suffer, be humiliated and despised in order to contribute towards the establishment of My reign in the hearts of men?' Whereupon, without hesitating, I embraced the cross which was presented to me all bristling with thorns and nails, and I said: 'Ah! my sole love; Ah! how much sweeter is it to my desires, and how much more do I love to suffer in order to make Thee known and loved, if Thou honour me with this grace, than to lose this grace in order to be one of those burning Seraphs!'" *

First Feast of the Sacred Heart celebrated at Paray-le-Monial on the Friday after the Octave of the Blessed Sacrament.

The time which Our Lord had determined for the establishment in this community of the devotion to his Sacred Heart having arrived, He disposed for it all hearts, changing them so perfectly that instead of the great opposition which there had been to it, those who had placed the greatest obstacle in the way of it, through not at first understanding it, were the most changed. "To execute the designs of His mercy, God willed to make use of an aged sister who was a 'living rule,' and who died afterwards in the odour of sanctity: it was Sister Mary Magdalen des Escures.

"This holy religious, who had until then been greatly opposed to this devotion, came, however, to find Blessed Margaret Mary on the last day of the octave of the Blessed Sacrament, to ask of her the little picture which she had in the noviciate, saying that she wanted

* *Letter* XXV., to Mother Greyfié.

to make a little altar with it in the choir, in order to invite the sisters to this devotion. The Blessed Sister was charmed with this proposal, but concealing her surprise at such a project of which the other would tell her nothing, awaited the issue with patience, praying unceasingly, and getting prayers that it might be happy.

"The next day, 21st June, 1686, the day fixed for honouring this divine Heart, Sister des Escures carefully prepared a chair covered with a very clean cloth, on which she placed the little miniature, which was in a gilt frame, and which she had adorned with flowers. She placed it thus before the *grille*, with a paper in her own handwriting, which invited all the spouses of Our Lord to come and pay their homage to His adorable Heart. Blessed Margaret Mary had the full consolation of seeing all the difficulties which had existed changed in a moment so admirably that she could not bless Our Lord enough for it. She saw with pleasure the zealous desire which each one testified that a picture of the Sacred Heart should be made, in order to procure promptly for the community this consolation.

"This is the work of the Lord, said those who had previously contradicted it, and wondering at their own sudden change they added that God was truly the Master of hearts, and that He was verifying what our venerable Sister had often said, that the Heart of Jesus would reign in spite of its enemies." *

Humble recourse to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

O most divine, most adorable, and most sweet Heart of Jesus, behold me humbly prostrate before Thee to

* *Life by her Contemp.* l., p. 240.

adore, bless, and glorify Thee, and to acknowledge the rights of Thy sovereignty over me, while I confess and acknowledge my servitude, and protest my love and fidelity towards Thee.

"O most holy Heart, receive me, since I am and will be all thine, despite all the opposition which my enemies will raise against me. Reject me not, but acknowledge that which belongs to Thee; receive it and defend it. Help my weakness to fulfil the extreme desire which I have to love and please Thee. Deign to grant me the graces necessary to do it perfectly, and to pray, act and suffer in the purity of thy love." *

* *Ancient MSS.* II., p. 501.

7th Day.

Our Lord's loving designs in favour of those who embrace the devotion to His Sacred Heart.

"OUR Lord told me," wrote Blessed Margaret Mary, "that He wished to be known, loved and adored by men, and that for this purpose He would communicate to them many graces when they consecrate themselves to the devotion and love of His Sacred Heart.

"He displays to me treasures of love and of graces for those who will wholly consecrate and sacrifice themselves to give and procure Him the honour, love and glory which they can; treasures so great that it is impossible for me to describe them. It seems to me that the great desire which Our Lord has that His Sacred Heart may be honoured by some particular homage is for the purpose of renewing in souls the effects of His redemption, by making of this divine Heart as it were a second Mediator between God and man; man's sins being so greatly multiplied that the fullest extent of Its power is required to obtain for them mercy, and the graces of salvation and sanctification which It so longs to impart copiously to them.

"He wishes to establish His new kingdom amongst us only that He may impart to us more abundantly His great mercies, and His precious graces of sanctification and salvation. 'But they shall be

taken away', He says, 'from those who will not profit of them to make them victorious within them;' because this gift is a precious potion given to us by the goodness of our heavenly Father, as a last remedy for our ills.

"I cannot believe that persons consecrated to this Sacred Heart will be lost or will fall under the dominion of Satan by mortal sin; I mean when having given themselves wholly to It they endeavour to honour, love and glorify It with all their power by conforming themselves in all things to Its holy maxims.

"There is no shorter way to perfection nor surer means of salvation than to be consecrated to this divine Heart and to render It all the homage of love, honour and praise of which we are capable.

"I think, and I cannot refrain from telling you, that the Sacred Heart will afford a particular protection of love and union to those communities which shall render to It particular acts of homage. It is the ardent desire to pour forth Its graces abundantly on souls which makes It long to be known, loved and glorified by Its creatures, in whom It would establish Its empire as the source of all good, in order to provide for all their needs. Hence it is that It would have us address ourselves to It with great confidence, and it seems to me that one of the most efficacious means of obtaining what we ask is to ask by means of the holy sacrifice of the Mass, on Fridays, by getting three or five Masses said in honour of the Five Wounds. Several persons reduced to the last extremity have by this received miraculous cures. *

* *Letters* xxxii, xlviii, xcv, xliii.

Divine promises.

Blessed Margaret Mary wrote to Father Rolin of the Society of Jesus:

"Why can I not tell all that I know of this sweet devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and discover to the whole world the treasures of graces which Jesus Christ holds within this adorable Heart, and which He intends to pour forth lavishly on all who practise devotion to It. I beseech you, my reverend Father, forget nothing which may infuse this devotion into every heart. Jesus Christ has told me in such a way that I cannot doubt of it, that it is by means of the Fathers of the Company of Jesus that He wishes to establish everywhere this solid devotion, and by it to make Himself an infinite number of faithful servants, of perfect friends and of most grateful children. The treasures of blessings and graces which this Sacred Heart contains are infinite; I do not know whether there is any exercise of devotion in the spiritual life which is more proper to elevate a soul to the highest perfection in a brief time, and to make it taste the true sweetness which is found in the service of Jesus Christ. Yes, I say with confidence that if men knew how agreeable to Jesus Christ this devotion is, there is no Christian, however little may be his love for this dear Saviour, who would not at once practise it. Above all get religious to embrace it, for they will derive so much benefit from it, that no other means would be required for restoring primitive fervour and most exact regularity in communities that are more careless, or for raising to the height of perfection those which are better ordered.

"My divine Saviour has manifested to me that those who are working for the salvation of souls will have the gift of touching the most hardened hearts, and will work with marvellous success if they themselves are penetrated with a tender devotion to His divine Heart.

"As for persons in the world, they will find by means of this sweet devotion all the helps necessary for their state, that is, peace in their family, refreshment in their labours, the blessing of heaven on all their undertakings, consolation in their troubles; and it is chiefly in this Sacred Heart that they will find their refuge during life and above all at the hour of their death. Ah! how sweet it is to die after having had a constant devotion to the Heart of Him who is to be our Judge. In a word it is certain that there is no one but would receive all kinds of heavenly succours if he had for Jesus Christ a grateful love such as we testify to Him by the devotion to His Heart. *

Fervour in the divine service is gained by union with the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

In a letter of Blessed Margaret Mary we read the following words:

"With regard to the trouble which is caused you by your coldness in God's service, He seems to inspire me to tell you that you must not be disturbed, and that to satisfy Him about it you have only to unite yourself in everything that you do to the Sacred Heart of Our Lord Jesus Christ, at the beginning as your disposition, at the end as your satisfaction. For example, when you can do nothing in prayer, be satisfied to offer the

* *Let.* cxxxii.

prayer which this divine Saviour makes for us in the most holy Sacrament of the Altar, offering His ardours to repair all your coldness. In every action say: 'My God, I will to do or suffer this in the Sacred Heart of Thy divine Son and according to Its holy intentions, which I offer Thee in reparation for all there is of impure and imperfect in mine.' And so in all matters. And when some trouble comes, some affliction or mortification, say to yourself: 'Take what the Sacred Heart of Jesus sends you to unite you to Itself.' Try moreover, above all things, to preserve that peace of heart which is better than all the riches imaginable; and the means to preserve it is to have no will more, but to put the will of this divine Heart in place of our own, to let It will for us what is most to Its glory, contenting ourselves with submitting and abandoning ourselves to It. In a word, this loving Heart will supply for all that may be lacking on your part, for It will love God for you, and you will love Him in It and by It."*

Act of Purity of Intention.

"I offer myself wholly to Thee, O Heart of love, with the intention that all my being, my life, my sufferings, may be unto Thy love, honour and glory, in time and in eternity. I love Thee, O Heart all worthy of love, as my sovereign good, my whole blessedness, my entire joy, the only object which deserves the love of all hearts. May my heart be reduced to ashes by the ardour and vehemence of this love, by which I renew with all my heart the offerings which I have made

* *Let.* cxviii., to Sr. de la Barge.

Thee of myself. Keep me from offending Thee and make me do all that is most pleasing to Thee. O Heart, source of pure love, why am I not all heart to love Thee, all spirit to adore Thee! Grant at least that I may be able to love but Thyself, in Thyself, and by and for Thyself. Let my memory remember Thee alone, let me have no understanding save for knowing Thee, no will or affection but for loving Thee, tongue but for praising Thee, eyes but for beholding Thee, feet but for seeking Thee, that I may be able one day to love Thee without fear of losing Thee, throughout a blessed eternity. Amen."*

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* *Ancient MSS.* II., p. 500.

8th Day.

THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS ASKS TO BE CONSOLED FOR THE INGRATITUDE OF MEN, WHICH HE FEELS MORE KEENLY THAN ALL THE TORMENTS OF HIS PASSION.

ONE day, when the Blessed Sacrament was exposed, Blessed Margaret Mary received from It a particular grace of which she gives an account in these terms: "I felt myself wholly drawn within myself by a greater than usual recollection of all my senses and powers, when Jesus Christ, my good Master, presented Himself to me all shining with glory, His five wounds brilliant as five suns. His sacred humanity sent forth flames from every part, and particularly his adorable breast, which seemed like a furnace. He opened this, and discovered to me His divine Heart, the living source of these flames. It was then that He showed me the unspeakable marvels of His pure love, and the excesses to which it had led Him in loving man, from whom He only received ingratitude. 'And this,' He said, 'causes me more pain than all that I have suffered in my passion. If they returned My love a little I should think lightly of all that I have done for them, and be willing to suffer, if possible, still more. But they have nothing but coldness and refusals for all My eagerness to do them good. Do thou at least give Me this pleasure, of supplying for their ingratitude as far as thou canst?' And when I represented to Him my inability, He

answered: 'Here is what will supply all that is wanting to thee.' At the same time that divine Heart opened, and there issued from it so ardent a flame that I thought it would consume me, penetrating me as it did until unable longer to bear it I besought Him to have pity on my weakness. 'I will be thy strength,' He said to me, 'fear nothing; only be attentive to My voice and to what I ask thee for the accomplishment of My designs.'"*

At a later time a new plaint of the Heart of Jesus again caused the tender heart of His servant a grievous pain. "It was," she says "when this beloved Heart was shown to me while these words were spoken: 'I have a burning thirst to be loved by men in the most holy Sacrament, and I find scarcely any one who tries to slake My thirst as I desire, by Making me some return.'" †

Blessed Margaret Mary is the victim chosen by Our Lord to repair the outrages done to His Heart.

"This divine Saviour appeared on another occasion to His slave and said to me: 'I am seeking a victim for My Heart, who shall be willing to offer herself as a sacrifice of immolation for the accomplishment of My designs.' Then I felt myself wholly penetrated with the greatness of this sovereign Majesty, and prostrating myself humbly at His feet, I presented to Him several holy souls who would faithfully correspond with His designs. 'No, I will have no other than thee,' said this amiable Saviour to me, 'and it is for this that I have chosen thee.' Then bursting into tears I replied that

* *Life by her Contemp.* I., p. 77.
† *Let.* cxxvii., to Fr. Rolin.

He knew well that I was a criminal, and that victims should be innocent; that I had indeed no will other than His, but that I could not resolve to do anything but what my superiors should ordain; and to this He consented."*

Another time this cry escaped from the heart of Blessed Margaret Mary: "Lord, what hast Thou not done to gain the heart of men? and yet they refuse it to Thee and often drive Thee from it. 'It is true, my child,' replied the divine Master, 'that My love has made me sacrifice all for them and they make Me no return; but I will that thou shouldst supply for their ingratitude by the merits of My Sacred Heart.'"

"I heard from my divine Master the following words," writes Blessed Margaret Mary again in one of her retreats: "I would have thy heart to be my refuge into which I can withdraw to find refreshment when sinners persecute me and drive Me from theirs. When I tell thee that the divine justice is angry with sinners thou shalt come to receive Me in Holy Communion; and having placed Me on the throne of thy heart thou shalt adore Me prostrating thyself at My feet. Thou shalt offer Me to My eternal Father, as I will teach Thee, to appease His just anger and to incline His mercy to spare. One just soul can obtain the pardon of a thousand criminals."†

Sinners in the world and Souls consecrated to God contribute to the sufferings of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

"After Holy Communion my divine Spouse presented Himself before me under the figure of an *Ecce homo*

* *Let.* cxxvi. to Fr. Robin.

† *Life by her Contemp.* I., pp. 109, 124, 159.

laden with His cross, covered with wounds and gashes, His adorable blood flowing from every one. He said to me with a sorrowful voice, full of anguish: 'Is there no one to take pity on me or to compassionate me and share my sorrow in the pitiful state to which sinners have brought me.'" *

"Another time, it was during the Carnival, this Heart of charity seemed to ask me this question, whether I would not bear It company on the cross during this time when He is so greatly abandoned through the eagerness which there is for pleasure; and He said that I might by the bitternesses which He would make me taste sweeten in some sort those which sinners pour into His Sacred Heart by their gaieties, that I ought to mourn without ceasing before Him in order to obtain mercy and to prevent sins reaching their height, and that I should beg God to pardon sinners, for the sake of the love which He bears to this well-beloved Heart." †

"One day Our Lord, showing me His loving Heart all rent and pierced, said to me: 'Behold the wounds which I receive from My chosen ones: others are satisfied with striking My body; these attack My Heart, which has never ceased to love them.

"Our Lord presented Himself before me again all covered with wounds, His body bleeding and His Heart all torn with anguish; He was as if utterly worn out. I prostrated myself at His feet with a great fear which had seized upon me, not daring to say anything to Him. He said to me: 'Behold whither my chosen people have reduced Me; I had destined them to appease My

* *Life by herself.* II., p. 366.
† *Let.* xcv. to Mother de Saumaise.

justice, and they persecute me secretly.' . . . I cannot describe the sufferings which this caused me.

"In His wearinesses He presented Himself to me when I had a moment to myself, telling me to kiss His wounds in order to relieve His pain." *

Prayer of Reparation.

O Sacred Heart, Thou deservest the affections and the love of all the hearts which Thou hast favoured, loved and done so infinitely much for, yet thou receivest but ingratitude and coldness, particularly from my heart, which justly merits Thy indignation. But as Thou art a Heart of love so also art Thou a Heart of goodness, of which I would take advantage for my reconciliation and pardon. . . . Ah! Heart most sweet, if the sorrow and shame of a heart which sees its error can satisfy Thee, pardon my heart, for it is such a one when it sees its infidelity and the little care which it has had to please Thee by its love. Heart of my God, Heart most holy, Heart which alone hast the power of pardoning sinners, pardon if Thou please this poor wretched heart. All its powers unite to make Thee the most humble satisfaction and reparation of honour.

"O Heart of my Jesus, I now resign and give over to Thee all my love, with its source which is my heart; and both these I give thee irrevocably, though with great confusion for having so long refused Thee Thine own possessions." †

". . . . I beseech the fiery Seraphim to offer to my God the holy ardours with which they burn, to supply for the want of love in myself and in all creatures."

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* *Life by her Contemp.* I., pp. 56, 57.
† *Little Book of Prayers.* II., p. 474.

9th Day.

The desires of the Heart of Jesus.

1. The Communion of Reparation.

"MY divine Saviour," says Blessed Margaret Mary, "commanded me to communicate on the first Friday of each month in order to make reparation, as far as possible, for the outrages which He has received during the month in the most Blessed Sacrament." *

"One Friday," she writes later, "during Holy Communion, He said these words to His unworthy slave, if she is not mistaken :

"I promise thee in the excess of the mercy of My Heart, that its all-powerful love will grant the grace of final repentance to all those who shall communicate on the first Fridays nine months consecutively, that they shall not die in My disfavour or without receiving the Sacraments, and that It will become their secure refuge at that last hour." †

She often herself experienced the power of the Communion of reparation to touch the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

"One day," she says, "When I was preparing for Holy Communion, I heard a voice saying to me: 'Behold, my child, the bad treatment which I receive

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* *Let.* cxxvii. to Fr. Rolin.

† *Let.* lxxxii. to Mother de Saumaise.

in that soul which has just received Me. She has renewed all the sorrows of My Passion.' I cast myself at His adorable feet, full of fear and grief, to wash them with tears which I could not contain, and I said to Him: My Lord and my God, if my life is of any use for these injuries, though my own are a thousand times greater, yet here behold me!. . . I am Thy slave, do with me what thou pleasest.' 'It is my will,' He said, 'that when I tell thee of the ill treatment which I receive from that soul thou prostrate thyself at My feet after receiving Me, in order to make a reparation of honour to My Heart, offering to My Father the bloody sacrifice of the Cross to this end, and also thy whole being to do homage to Mine, and to make reparation for the insults which I receive in that heart.'

"At these words I suffered great pains and continued without ceasing to ask mercy of Our Lord, who said to me one Easter day after having received Him: 'I have heard thy groaning, and I have inclined My mercy towards that heart.' This greatly consoled me." *

2. *The Holy Hour.*

When Our Lord asked from Blessed Margaret Mary the Communion of reparation on the first Friday of the month, He had also commanded her to spend an hour of the night between Thursday and Friday in honouring the agony of His Sacred Heart. These are the very words of Our Lord:

"Thou shalt communicate on the first Friday of every month, and on the night between the Thursday

* *Life by her Contemp.* I., p. 65.

and Friday I will make thee share in that mortal sadness that I willed to suffer in the garden of Olives, which will cast thee in an incomprehensible manner into an agony more intolerable than death. And to accompany Me in that humble prayer which I then presented to My Father, thou shalt rise between eleven o'clock and midnight, and shalt prostrate thyself with thy face to the earth in order to appease the divine anger by asking mercy for sinners, and also to sweeten in some sort the bitterness which I felt from desertion by My Apostles, whom I was forced to reproach for not being able to watch one hour with Me; and during this hour thou shalt do as I will instruct thee." *

Such is the first revelation concerning the Holy Hour. It is then an exercise of vocal or mental prayer, with the object of paying homage to the Sacred Heart of Jesus in the extreme agony which He suffered in the night of His Passion. The following words of Blessed Margaret Mary are well suited to occupy pious souls during this time:

"While I was attentively considering the one object of my love in the garden of Olives, plunged in the sadness and agony of a sorrow full at once of pain and love, and feeling myself forcibly urged with the desire of sharing in His extreme anguish, He said to me: 'Here it was that I suffered interiorly more than in all the rest of My Passion, seeing Myself in universal abandonment both of heaven and of earth, loaded with

* *Life by her Contemp.* I., p. 78. To make the practice of this devotion easier the Church has given leave to select any hour on Thursday evening.

the sins of all mankind. I appeared before the holiness of God, who, without any regard to My innocence, turned His fury upon me, making Me to drink of the chalice which contained all the gall and bitterness of His just indignation, and as if He had forgotten the name of Father to sacrifice Me to His just anger. No creature can comprehend the extent of the torments which I then suffered, and it is this same pain that the guilty soul feels when it stands before the tribunal of the divine sanctity, which falls upon it, trainples on it, crushes and overwhelms it in its just fury.' " *

3. Various other practices demanded by Our Lord in honour of His Sacred Heart.

We read in the life of Blessed Margaret Mary, that she had established amongst her novices a pious usage which might be called the germ of the association of the *Guard of Honour of the Sacred Heart.* She recommended them to be faithful to remember, at the sound of the clock, the blessed hour and moment when this adorable Heart was formed by the operation of the Holy Spirit in the most pure womb of the Blessed Virgin, and to add some words of thanksgiving to this beloved Heart for Its infinite charity to all men.

Our Lord had also asked from her to multiply everywhere the little *scapulars of the Sacred Heart.* She wrote to Mère Greyfié : † " I feel myself irresistibly urged to tell you on the part of our good Master that He wishes you to get a plate printed of the picture of His Sacred Heart, in order that all those who would give Him some special homage may have pictures of It

* *Life by her Contemp.* I., p. 52. † *Let.* xliv.

in their houses, and small ones to carry upon their persons."

Our Lord had also expressed to her the desire that certain offices, such as those of Mediatrix, of Reparatrix, should be established in honour of His Sacred Heart. "Sister N.," she wrote, "was distressed that she could be of no use to the Sacred Heart, but It has given her her office, making her Its mediatrix to beg the Eternal Father to make this Sacred Heart known, the Holy Ghost to make it loved, and the Blessed Virgin to use her power with It that It may make Its mighty effects known in all those who apply to It. It desires to have one amongst you employed in the same office, one chosen by lot, saying that blessed will be she on whom the lot shall fall, because It will be in turn her mediator. You can change her every year. It, moreover, asks for a reparatrix, who will most humbly ask pardon of God for all the injuries which are done to It in the most holy Sacrament of the altar: and she may be humbly confident that It will obtain grace and pardon for her. You might change her like the other. As for you, your office will be to offer to this dear Heart all of good that is done for Its honour and according to Its designs."

Act of loving Contrition.

"O most sacred and adorable Heart of Jesus, behold me humbly prostrate before Thee, with a contrite heart, a heart penetrated with lively grief for having loved Thee so little, and done Thee so many injuries by my failings, ingratitude, perfidy, and other acts of infidelity, by which I have made myself unworthy of Thy mercy and of all the graces and favours of Thy pure love. O

Heart of Jesus, my Saviour, exercise on me that office which costs Thee so dear, and lose not the fruits of so many pains and so grievous a death; but honour this death in my salvation, that my heart may love, praise, and glorify Thee eternally. . . . . If Thy justice condemn it as unworthy of forgiveness, it will appeal to the tribunal of Thy love, prepared to suffer all rigourous treatment rather than be stayed a single instant from loving Thee. Cut, burn, mutilate; let me love Thee, and it is enough. Spare neither my body nor my life when there is question of Thy glory. I am thine, O divine and adorable Heart. Effect then my salvation, I beseech Thee, and abandon me not to myself, by punishing my sins with new relapses into the same sins. Ah! rather a thousand deaths than offend Thee, whom I love a thousand times more than my life." *

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* *Little Book of Prayers.* II., p. 485.

10th Day.

Divine Liberality of the Sacred Heart of Our Lord to Souls which ardently try to Procure His Glory.

ALMOST every page of the letters of Blessed Margaret Mary contains the sweetest assurances of the rewards prepared by Our Lord for those who have a zeal for the glory of His divine Heart.

"This zeal," she tells us, "is the most essential means for entering into the friendship of this loving Heart, advancing far into Its favours, rising higher and higher in Its pure love, deserving the sacred tenderness of this divine Heart, being of the number of Its true friends, Its dearest friends, Its well-beloved favourites, being regarded as an object of its complaceny, being before this Sacred Heart as an odour of sweetness.

"The Sacred Heart of our good Master will not let your zeal to make Him known, loved, and honoured, go unrewarded; and I think that we are enough rewarded when He judges us worthy to render Him some service. It is reward enough to please Him. You do this Sacred Heart a pleasure which will procure for yourself great favours for all eternity.

"How happy are they whom He employs to help Him to establish His kingdom! For it seems to me that He is as a King, who does not give rewards while making his conquests and triumphing over his enemies,

but when he reigns on his throne victorious. The adorable Heart of Jesus wishes to establish in all hearts the kingdom of His pure love, overturning and destroying the kingdom of Satan; and it seems to me that the strength of His desires is shown in the great rewards which He promises to all those who with good will engage in the same enterprise, by following out with all their power the lights and means which he offers them.

"Ah! what sanctifying and saving graces has this divine Heart poured out over Its worshippers on this Its feast-day, and with what earnestness does It repeat all the promises which It has made to them that they shall never perish. O that you could but know what merit and glory there is in honouring this most sweet Heart of our adorable Jesus! what will be the reward of those who after consecrating themselves to It seek only to increase Its honour! . . . . . Yes, it seems to me that this intention alone will give more merit and acceptableness to their actions before God than all that they could do in any other way without this application.

"This divine Heart will reward you not only in yourself but also in your relations and all with whom you are connected, whom It will regard with favourable and merciful eyes, whom It will help and protect in all things, if they but address themselves to It with confidence, for It will have an eternal memory of all that they do for Its glory.

"You must know that this Sacred Heart will remember and enjoy during all eternity what you have done for It; so that a day will come when you will say that if you had suffered all the torments of the Martyrs

you would be well rewarded, were it only on account of the great number of souls which this divine Heart will save from perdition by this means. It seemed to me that the Sacred Heart made me see that many names were inscribed in It on account of the desire which they have to get It honoured, and on this account It will never let them be erased from It. But It did not say to me that Its friends should have no crosses; for It wants them to make their greatest happiness consist in tasting Its bitternesses.

"When He was conversing with His poor slave He made clearly manifest to her that He would make to Himself a crown of twelve of His most dearly beloved ones who should have procured Him the most glory here below, and that He would place them as twelve brilliant stars round about His Sacred Heart."

To conclude, she thus finishes her account of one of the graces with which she was favoured, when she saw angels presenting to the divine Heart certain hearts which they held as it were by the hand. . . . "Several of them had their names inscribed in characters of gold in this Sacred Heart, into which some of them entered and plunged themselves with eagerness and delight, saying: 'In this abyss of love is our abode and rest for ever.' These were the hearts of those who had worked the hardest to make the Heart of our divine Master known and loved." *

The Heart of Our Lord is a tree of life whose fruits are to be distributed to the whole world.

"Our adorable Saviour showed me the devotion to His divine Heart as a fair tree which He had destined

* *Letters* cxiv., xcviii., xcv.. lxxxv.

from all eternity to have its germs and roots in the midst of our Institute, and then to extend its branches throughout all its houses, in order that each one might gather its fruits according to her desire and her taste, though with unequal abundance according to her labour—as also the benefit derived would be in proportion to the good dispositions of those who fed upon these fruits. They are fruits of life and of eternal salvation, which are able to renew within us the primitive spirit of our holy vocation. It seems to me that the accidental glory of our holy Father and Founder, St. Francis de Sales, is never so much increased as by this means; but this divine Heart wills that the daughters of the Visitation should liberally distribute the fruits of this sacred tree to all who wish to taste them, without fear of their failing, because He intends by this means, as He revealed to His unworthy slave, to restore life to many, by drawing them out of the way of perdition, by destroying the kingdom of Satan in their souls in order to set up that of His love, which will allow none to perish of those who have consecrated themselves to Him, giving Him their entire homage and love with a sincere and free will, and procuring the same for Him according to the whole extent of their power. But He will not stop there: He has still greater designs which can be executed only by His almighty power, which can do all that it wills." *

"The adorable Heart of Jesus, if I am not mistaken, gives ineffable delights to our holy Founder for that Its worship is established in our Institute, because It will make Itself the support and defence of it.

* *Life by her Contemp.* I., p. 287.

"What blessings and graces has the Sacred Heart of Our Lord Jesus Christ prepared to pour forth over this dear Institute, and in particular over the houses which will procure Him the most honour and glory! On those which put themselves under Its adorable protection It will pour them forth abundantly from the treasure of Its sanctifying graces, by the unction of Its charity and the sweetness of Its holy love. . . . . But, oh! how great is this love, and how abounding in mercy! How indebted are we to this divine Heart, in that It condescends to make use of us to make Itself known and loved! We should be most blessed were we able to give our lives to procure the glory of this most sweet Heart." *

Counsels of Blessed Margaret Mary to her novices on the establishment of the devotion to the Sacred Heart

"It seems to me that by your little practices in honour of the Sacred Heart of Our Lord you have gained His good graces, and that by your fidelity in them you give Him so much pleasure that you make yourselves the object of His loving complacency, and that this gives Him more satisfaction than anything else that you could do, because He wishes that this most sweet Heart should be known, loved, and honoured, and therefore you could not give Him more pleasure than by furthering this to the utmost of your power. And I think He wants me to assure you on His part that so long as you are faithful to this He will not let you fall into disfavour with His Sacred Heart, which will take care of you in

* *Letters* xcv., cvi.

proportion as you trust and abandon yourself to It. It will think of you when you have forgotten yourselves. But, above all, It wishes that you should be humble of heart like It, and ever inflamed with charity.

"It is true, my dearest sisters, that you are greatly obliged, I mean most extremely obliged, to Our Lord Jesus Christ, for that He has, in the excess of His love, inscribed your names in His Sacred Heart: but you have still the liberty of erasing them. Take good care that this misfortune does not befal you, and it could only come by mortal sin, after you had turned and driven yourselves away from this divine Heart, which will not reject you unless you have first despised and forgotten It. I trust that you will all be so faithful to It, and so fully on your guard, that this misfortune will not happen, but that on the contrary you will insinuate yourselves more and more into Its divine friendship, that It may consume you in Its purest flames, and may receive you at the hour of death. But this will be only after having fought all our life: we must be resolved to suffer all and do all without giving way, for the cowardly and the tepid are rejected." *

Aspirations to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

"O divine Heart of Jesus, living in the Heart of Mary, I beseech Thee to live and reign in all hearts, and to consume them in Thy pure love!

"O most liberal Heart, be our whole treasure and our whole sufficiency!

"O most loving and most desirable Heart, teach us to love Thee, and to desire Thee alone.

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* *Instructions.* II., p. 439.

" Destroy in us the kingdom of sin and establish in us the kingdom of virtue, that Thy image may be perfectly formed in us, and be one day an adornment of Thy heavenly palace. Amen !" *

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* *Instructions and Little Book of Prayers.* II., pp. 480, 448, 442.

11th Day.

The Soul Purified in the Heart of Jesus.

THE following was written during one of Blessed Margaret Mary's retreats:—"On the first day of my solitude, my Sovereign Master presented me His Sacred Heart as a furnace of love into which I felt myself thrown, and at once felt myself penetrated and inflamed with such burning heat that it seemed as if I should be reduced to ashes. These words were spoken to me: 'This is the divine purgatory of my love, in which you must purify yourself during the time of this purgative life; you shall afterwards find a dwelling of light, and finally one of union and transformation.'" *

Her teachings corresponded to the lights with which her soul was inundated. "Enter," she said, "into this Sacred Heart as into a furnace of love, in order to purify yourself from all the stains you have contracted, and there consume that life of sin, in order to be renewed in that of grace and pure love which will transform you wholly into itself. †

"We must be wholly consumed, without exception or intermission, in this burning furnace of the Sacred Heart of our adorable Master, whence we must never come out. And after losing our corrupt heart in its Divine flames of pure love, we must take out a perfectly

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* *Life by her Contemp.* I., p. 193.

† *Various Writings.* II., p. 469.

new one, which may make us henceforth live quite a new life, having new thoughts and operations, with fresh purity and fervour in all our actions; that is to say, there must be nothing more of our own, but this divine Heart must be substituted for our own. It alone must act in us, and for us; Its will must keep ours so annihilated that there may be no resistance on our part; and, lastly, Its affections, Its thoughts, and Its desires must be in the place of ours, and above all Its love, which must love It in us and for us. And thus the Sacred Heart being all to us in everything, we shall be able to say with St. Paul: 'We live no longer, but Jesus lives within us.'" *

"Ah! how delightful it is to love this Heart alone for the love of Itself: we must love It, so that we neither live nor breathe but for It, but we must love It so much in this life that we may be made one same thing with It, and never be separated from It.

"Its pure love is the sole love which should possess us, make us act or suffer; for It is never idle in a heart. Let us then yield ours without reserve to Its ardours, that we may love It with all the being which It has given us, that everything may be subjected to It, that everything may yield to and obey this divine love. Let us love then, and love without exception; let us give up and sacrifice everything for this happiness, and we shall have everything in possessing the Sacred Heart of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Let us love It with all our strength, and submit all to Its love, that It may consume and purify us with Its most lively flames. O

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* *Let.* cviii., to Sr. de la Barge.

that we may burn eternally in the fiery furnace of this divine Heart!

"The numerous graces which we have received are as so many burning flames of Its pure love, which should make us unceasingly burn with perfect gratitude, and with faithful correspondence to Its designs. Ah! why do we not burn with that divine fire which It came to cast upon earth! Yes, we must be consumed therein. And I desire my whole exercise to be to love and to burn in these holy ardours, and this Sacred Heart will be the altar of our sacrifices.

"Our heart is made for God alone. Woe to him who is satisfied with less than God, or who lets himself burn with other fire than His pure love. If you knew how sweet it is to love God, there is nothing that you would not suffer to possess this holy love. O my God, had I a thousand hearts, a thousand loves, a thousand lives, I would immolate them unto Thy service." *

The Heart of Jesus chooses that of Blessed Margaret Mary as an altar on which to kindle the fire of Its love.

"Our Lord honoured me with one of His visits," says Blessed Margaret Mary, "and said to me: 'Dost thou know to what end I give thee My graces so abundantly? It is to render thee like a sanctuary where the fire of My love may burn continually. Thy heart is as a sacred altar which nothing sullied must touch. I have chosen thee to immolate to My Eternal Father burnt-offerings to appease His justice, and to render Him infinite glory by the offering thou wilt make to Him of Myself in these sacrifices, uniting to them that

* *Letters* cxiv., xxii., cvii., xcviii.

of thine own being, to honour Mine.' I acknowledge that since that time I have felt in my heart a fire so burning and so violent, that I wished to communicate it to all creatures, in order that my God might be loved." *

A life of sacrifice, abandonment and love in the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

Blessed Margaret Mary wrote as follows to a person who had decided to embrace the devotion to the Sacred Heart: "I do not doubt that the Sacred Heart of Jesus will be much pleased with the sacrifice that you wish to make to Him of yourself, in order to be wholly His, to do and to suffer all for His love, so that you may live in Him a life of sacrifice, abandonment, and love; of sacrifice of all that is dearest to you, and which will cost you the most; of total abandonment of yourself to His loving guidance; taking Him for your guide in the way of salvation—and you must do nothing without asking His grace and assistance, which I hope He will give you in proportion as you confide in Him. Further, we must live that life of love which will unite us to Him by the love of our own abjection and annihilation, in order to conform ourselves entirely to His states of sacrifice, abandonment and love in the most Blessed Sacrament. There love holds Him as a victim to be continually sacrificed for the glory of His Father and our salvation. Unite yourself then to Him in all that you do; refer all to His glory; establish your abode in this loving Heart of Jesus, and you will there find an unalterable peace and strength to carry into effect all

* *Life by her Contemp.* I., p. 64.

the good desires that He gives you, and to avoid all voluntary faults; carry to It all pains and troubles, for all that comes from this Sacred Heart is sweet, and It changes all into love." *

Request to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

"Put me, O most sweet Saviour, into Thy Sacred Side and adorable Heart, which is a burning furnace of pure love, and I am safe. I trust that Thou wilt do this for me, O my Jesus, my sovereign good. I choose Thy Sacred Heart as my abode, that It may be my strength in my struggles, the support of my weakness, my light and guide in darkness; in a word the supply of all my defects, the sanctifier of all mine actions and intentions, which I unite to Thine and offer as my continual disposition for receiving Thee. Amen." †

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* *Lett.* xlix., to Sr. de la Barge.

† *Little Book of Prayers.* II., pp. 479, 495.

12th Day.

THE HEART OF JESUS THE SOURCE OF SANCTITY.

"THE adorable Heart of Jesus must be the sanctifier and consumer of ours by the burning ardours of Its pure love. Ah! we must love the sweetest heart of Jesus with all our strength, whatever it may cost us. We must sanctify ourselves at every cost, and since this Heart is holy, we must become holy. And as we have only to love, why do we not burn incessantly in the ardent furnace of Its pure love, which will at once purify and sanctify us?" *

"We ought no longer to breathe but inflamed by love—pure crucifying love, ever offered as a sacrifice by a continual immolation of ourselves to the Divine good pleasure, in order that it may be perfectly accomplished in us, contenting ourselves with loving and letting Him act, whether He abase or exalt us, whether He console or afflict us. All must be indifferent to us; provided He is satisfied, that should suffice us. Let us then love this only love of our souls, since He has first loved us, and still loves us so ardently that He ever burns with love for us in the most Blessed Sacrament. We have only to love this Holy of Holies to become holy. Who then shall prevent us from becoming so, since we have hearts to love, and bodies to suffer? But, ah! can we suffer when we love? No, there is no more suffering for those who ardently love

* *Letters* l., cx.

the Sacred Heart of Jesus; because humiliations, contempt, contradictions, and all that is most bitter in nature are changed into love in this adorable Heart, which would be loved without division, which would possess all without reserve, and do everything in us without resistance on our part. Let us then give ourselves up to Its power; confide in It, and we shall see that It will infallibly employ all those who are to work out our perfection, in such a manner that the process will soon be completed provided we place no obstacles. . . . . Ah! how careful is he who loves Him perfectly to beware of resisting Him!* Let us then love Him with all our strength and powers, and be all His without reserve, for He will have all or nothing. And after having once really given our whole selves, let us never take back the gift, and He will have a care to sanctify us in proportion to that which we have for glorifying Him."

Advice for attaining Sanctity.

"Our Lord wishes to see you advance by rapid steps in the paths of His love, how crucifying soever they may be to nature. No longer bargain with Him then, but give Him all, and He will make you find all again in His divine Heart. It is a good sign when grace pursues and presses us; but let us fear lest it grow weary and abandon us.

"Try to cultivate well and profit by the good sentiments which you receive from the sovereign goodness; be attentive to them, for the Holy Spirit breathes where He willeth. Therefore let us turn grace to profit;

* *Let.* cviii., to Sr. de la Barge.

for when our Lord gives good inspirations He gives us the grace to accomplish them: not so the creature. Follow then His light without wearying, until you have made Him the absolute Master of your heart." *

"Learn to quit and forget yourself by an entire abandonment to the mercy of the providence of the Sacred Heart, like a statue in the hands of a sculptor, in order that It may cut and chisel according to Its pleasure. You must embrace lovingly all occasions of suffering, as precious pledges of the love of the Sacred Heart, remembering that we become holy only by renouncing and mortifying ourselves, and in a word by crucifying ourselves in everything, and everywhere." †

"It is true that on the part of nature which fears its own destruction and all that makes it suffer, this will cost you much. But alas! could we put it to death without much suffering, since all within us opposes it?—for our passions continually revolt, and make us often fall. We must not, however, on this account be discouraged, or uneasy, but do violence to ourselves and draw profit from our falls to animate us to the combat, after the example of the Saints, who experienced their own frailty like ourselves. We must therefore fight against ourselves to the end, as they did, and die with our arms in hand; for the crown will be given only to the conqueror." ‡

"You know that there is no medium, it is a question either of salvation or of perdition for an eternity. The one or the other depends on ourselves; we must choose

* *Let.* lxxiii., to Sr. de la Barge.

† *Particular Admonit.* II., p. 427.

‡ *Let.* lxxvii., to her Brother.

either to love God eternally in heaven with the Saints, after having done violence to ourselves, by mortifying and crucifying ourselves here below as they did, or we may renounce their happiness by giving to nature all that it desires." *

"Avoid over-eagerness, and endeavour to form your interior and exterior on the model of the humble sweetness of the loving Heart of Jesus; doing each action with the same tranquillity as if you had nothing else to do, and with the same purity of love as if it were the last of your life, trying to employ each moment according to the end for which it is destined." †

"I wish that we could entirely quit and forget ourselves, so as neither to see nor possess anything but our one Necessary Good who desires this of us. All our life should tend but to that unity, by a pure and simple act; a unity of will to that of our sovereign Good, willing only what He wills; unity of love, unity of heart, mind and operation, uniting ourselves solely to what He does in us." ‡

Blessed Margaret Mary chooses the surest way of attaining Sanctity.

She had been already several years in religion when Our Lord presented Himself to her in the way she thus relates: "bearing in one hand the picture of a life the happiest that could be imagined for a religious soul—all peace and consolation both interior and exterior, perfect health, the esteem and applause of creatures—

* *Let.* lxxii., to Sr. de Thélis.
† *Partic. Admonit.* II., p. 404.
‡ *Let.* lxxxix., to Sr. de la Barge.

in the other hand the picture of a life abject, crucified, despised, contradicted and always suffering in body and soul. Presenting these two portraits to me, He said: 'choose, my daughter, the one which pleases thee the most: I will give thee the same graces with the one as the other.' Protesting myself at His feet to adore Him, I said to Him: 'O my Lord, I desire only Thyself, and the choice Thou art pleased to make for me.' And after having much pressed me to choose, I said to Him again: 'Thou art sufficient for me, O my God; do for me what will glorify Thee the most, without having any regard to my interests or consolation. Please Thyself, that is sufficient for me.' Then He told me that like Magdalen I had chosen the better part which should not be taken from me, since it would be my inheritance for ever; and presenting me that picture of crucifixion—'This is the one I have chosen for thee, the one which pleases me the most, both for the accomplishment of My designs and to render thee conformed to Myself. The other picture is a life of enjoyment and not of merit: that is for eternity.'

"I therefore accepted that picture of death, kissing the hand which presented it to me, although nature shuddered at it. I embraced it with all my heart, and clasping it to my breast, I felt it so strongly impressed upon me that I seemed to become a being made of all that I had seen represented in it." *

Act of adoration and love to the Sacred Heart.

I now adore, with all the forces of my heart, Thy sovereignty, O most sacred, divine and adorable Heart

* *Life by her Contemp.* I., p. 103.

of Jesus, which I would fear and serve with a continual attention to displeasing Thee no more, because Thou art infinitely good. O most holy Heart, I love Thee, and wish to love Thee sovereignly above all things, with all my strength and powers, detesting every sin, trusting that being all Thine—since Thou hast brought me forth on the Cross with so many pains—Thou wilt have pity on my weaknesses and miseries, and wilt not let me be lost in them.

"I love Thee with all the love of which my heart is capable; but extend its capacity and increase my love, that I may love Thee more, and that this love may make me all Thine for ever. It is the grace which I beg of Thee for myself and for all hearts that are capable of loving Thee."*

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* *Ancient Mss.* II., pp. 495, 500.

13th Day.

THE HEART OF JESUS DESIRES TO BE MORE LOVED BY WORKS THAN BY WORDS.

"IF you desire to possess Jesus and to dwell in His Sacred Heart, you must no longer listen to unmortified nature, nor to the suggestions of self love. Let it cry out as much as it pleases; we belong to the Heart of Jesus, who desires to be loved with a love of preference as to everything." *

"Offer yourself therefore to this Sacred Heart as a victim to its Sacrificer, to be slain and immolated on the altar of Its pure love, which will consume it as a holocaust in Its divine flames, in order that nothing of self may remain, and that you may be able to say with St. Paul: No, I live no longer, but it is Jesus Christ who lives in me. It is in Him, and for Him that I act, and it is His Sacred Heart that lives and acts for me, that loves for me, and repairs all my faults." †

"The Sacred Heart of Our Lord desires that you should sacrifice to Him all that nature would refuse Him. If He cause you to find inconstancy, and bitterness in creatures, it is because He loves you, and will not have you attach yourself to what is perishable, but to Himself alone.

"Ah! if we could comprehend the ardent love that He has for us, and how delightful it is to love Him and

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* *Partic. Admonit.* II., p. 415.

† *Various Writings.* II., p. 471.

to be wholly His, we should soon despise all else in order to make a return for His love by loving Him more in works than in words. Virtue does not consist in making fine reflections and resolutions, or in saying fine words, but in good fulfilments and effects, otherwise those would only tend to our greater condemnation. Therefore be faithful in your interior, and give to God what you have promised Him."*

"Our heart is so little that it cannot contain two loves, and being made only for the Divine it has no repose when we mingle another with it. Since He who loves is omnipotent, let us also love and nothing will appear difficult to us. The Sacred Heart of Jesus well knows what passes within yours, and this is why It permits your trials. Keep yourself in peace and abandon yourself to all Its designs over your soul. You will in the end have victory and peace in that Sacred Heart.† Have good courage, It will be the reward of your Victories."

Counsels for strengthening the soul during the combats of the spiritual life.

"Like a soldier who is liable to be continually engaged in warfare, you must prepare yourself to resist courageously the attacks of your enemies in the presence of your Sovereign, who will Himself be your buckler and your strength, having the power to destroy them when He pleases.

"But it is His glory to expose us to the combat, in order that, making us triumph, His strength may

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* *Partic. Admonit.* II., pp. 410, 374.

† *Let.* xciii.; *Part. Admonit.* II. ,p., 384.

appear in our weakness, rendering us victorious, so that He may have a title to reward us. And since He takes pleasure in our fighting, let it be ours to be faithful to Him.

"What have you to fear since this Sacred Heart surrounds you with its power as with a wall, impregnable to the attacks of your enemies? You ought to keep yourself in this secure fortress, taking refuge there when attacked by your enemies who dwell within yourself, and who wish to cast you into sadness and dejection at the least difficulty that presents itself.

"When you are tempted, unite your heart to the adorable Heart of Jesus; and say: 'O my Saviour, be Thou my strength, combat for me; I do not refuse the battle, provided Thou wilt be my defence, so that I may not offend Thee; since I am, and will be wholly Thine, without reserve.' At other times: 'O Lord, my heart is Thine. Let it not be occupied with anything but Thee, who art the reward of all my victories, and the immovable support of my infirmity.' 'O Sacred Heart of my Jesus, put my enemies to confusion.' 'My God, I suffer violence, make haste to help me.' Our enemies cannot hurt us if we do not stay to listen to them, or to reflect upon our troubles.

"When thoughts of human respect attack you, say within yourself: 'No, my God, I will do neither more nor less on account of creatures; since I will to please Thee alone, it is enough for me that Thou seest me everywhere.' As to all those thoughts of vanity, you must take no heed of them, but say to that satanic spirit, when he suggests them to you in any of your actions: 'accursed Satan, I renounce thee and thy

accursed suggestions: I did not begin for thee, and I will not end for thee.'

"When you have committed faults, be not cast down, because dejection and disquiet and over-eagerness withdraw souls from God, and drive Jesus from our heart. But in asking Him pardon let us, entreat His Sacred Heart to make satisfaction for us, and restore us into favour with His Divine Majesty.* Say then with confidence to the all-loving Heart of Jesus: 'O my only love, pray for Thy poor slave, and repair the evil which I have just committed; make it turn to Thy glory, to the edification of my neighbour, and to the salvation of my own soul.' And by acting thus, our falls are sometimes very useful to humble us and teach us what we are, and how profitable it is for us to lie hidden in the abyss of our nothingness.† After having humbled yourself in this manner, begin anew with increased fidelity; the Sacred Heart loves this manner of acting because it keeps the soul in peace. Abandon yourself to Its care and loving guidance, often saying to yourself: 'Since the Sacred Heart is mine, what can be wanting to me? And if I belong wholly to It, who shall hurt me?' Above all, I advise you to be cheerful, joyous and contented, for that is the true sign of the Spirit of God, who desires to be served with peace and gladness. May the peace of the adorable Heart of Jesus ever be the plenitude of ours, so that nothing may be capable of disturbing our tranquillity. Take for your motto: Divine love has vanquished me, It alone shall possess my heart." ‡

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* *Partic. Admonit.* II., pp. 400, 438, 460, 407.

† *Let.* lxxxvi., to Sr. de la Barge. ‡ *Partic. Admonit.* II., pp. 422, 384.

The Sacred Heart gives us strength to overcome ourselves.

On one occasion when Blessed Margaret Mary, then a novice, "had a difficulty in submitting herself, her Divine Master showed her his sacred Body covered with wounds which He had suffered for her love, reproaching her with her ingratitude, and her cowardly reluctance to overcome herself for love of Him. 'What would you then have me do, my God,' said she, 'since my will is stronger than I?' He told her that if she put it in the wound of His Sacred side, she would no longer have any difficulty in overcoming herself. 'O my Saviour!' she said, 'put it so deeply in, and enclose it so securely that it may never come out again.!' She acknowledges that from that moment all appeared to her so easy that she had no more difficulty in overcoming herself." *

Prayer to Our Lord as Victim.

"It is to honour Thy state of Victim in the Sacrament of love that I come to offer myself to Thee as such, beseeching Thee to will to be my sacrificer, and to immolate me on the altar of Thine adorable Heart. As this victim is unholy in all its parts, I beseech Thee, O my divine sacrificer, to deign to purify and consume it in the burning flames of Thy divine Heart, as a perfect holocaust of love and of grace, to give me a new life, and to enable me to say with truth: I have no more of myself nor of mine: whether I live or die, my Jesus is my ownself and to be mine is to be His. Amen. †

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* *Life by her Contemp.* I., p. 31.

† *Mon Jésus est mon moi; mon mien c'est d'être sienne. Ancient Ms.* II., p. 493.

14th Day.

THE HEART OF JESUS IS THE MASTER OF VIRTUES.

OUR Lord one day addressed these words to Blessed Margaret Mary, in discovering to her His loving Heart: "Behold the Master whom I give thee, who will teach thee all that thou hast to do for My love."

This Blessed Sister in her turn inviting us to listen to the lessons of her divine Master, says to us:

"Come to this Sacred Heart as Its disciple in the School of pure love, quitting and forgetting all worldly knowledge, and self-love, and vanity, in order no longer to be learned in anything except His pure love, running to Him generously when you hear His voice which says: 'Come to Me, all you who aspire to My love, and I will place you in the source of pure love.* Learn of Me to be meek and humble of heart, otherwise you cannot be loved nor recognised by My Sacred Heart, which will not own you for Its disciples so long as you do not conform yourself to It by the practice of Its holy maxims.'

"Keep yourself always, both at prayer and at all other times, as a disciple before his Master, while He teaches you to do His will perfectly, by the perfect renunciation of your own. It will be necessary for you as a faithful servant to do violence to yourself in

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* *Various Writings.* II., p. 469.

order to labour fervently in the service of your Master, who will only reward your actions in proportion to your love, by which He will unite you to His Heart. He desires that you regulate your heart by the virtues of His own. As love renders lovers conformable to one another, you must, if you wish to be loved by Jesus, render yourself humble and meek as He is. In a word your perfection consists in conforming your life and actions to the holy maxims of the Sacred Heart of Jesus." *

Advice for the practice of the virtues of humility and sweetness.

"I think that you can do nothing that will sooner gain for you the friendship of the Sacred Heart of our good Master, or render you more agreeable to Him, than to be very meek and humble, but with that true humility which renders you submissive to every one, and which makes you suffer in silence the little mortifications and humiliations which befall you, without excusing yourself or complaining, ever thinking that you deserve worse, and repressing courageously the sentiments of immortified nature.

"When you feel a desire to excuse yourself, say within yourself: Jesus was innocent, and He was silent when accused, and I who commit so many faults, shall I presume to justify myself? Let your glory now be in nothing but His humiliations, saying when you receive any—this is what I deserve, not approbation and praise. Cherish and honour those who humble and mortify you; look upon them as your greatest benefactors.

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* *Partic. Admonit.* II., pp. 431, 378, 396.

"The Sacred Heart will have a particular care and love of you if you keep interiorly humble, making yourself meek and patient in suffering abjections and humiliations, which are sometimes all the more trying because they are little and pass without remark. Suffer then with a gentle tranquillity, ever thinking that it is the loving Heart of our dear heavenly Father which has prepared them for you, to make you perfect according to Its desire. Keep little and lowly in your own eyes, that you may grow great in this divine Heart. Your watchword must be: 'This is the time to humble myself, and to prove my love to God.'

"Sweetness towards your neighbour will make you condescending in his regard, charitable in rendering him little services, excusing him in his faults notwithstanding all the repugnances which you may feel when he may have done something which you do not like, and praying for him. Thus you will gain the Sacred Heart of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Meekly support the little contradictions which come from your neighbour and from the opposition which there may be between his disposition and yours, and show no resentment towards him, for that would be contrary to the Sacred Heart of Our Lord. Never retain any coldness towards him, because the Sacred Heart of Jesus would have the same towards you. Be good and condescending towards him, but give him nothing of what you owe to the Heart of Jesus." *

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* *Partic. Admonit.* II., pp. 390, 418, 437, 425.

The virtues bloom under the action of the Sacred Heart.

"You may consider this Sacred Heart as a divine canal whence the stream of living waters continually issues to water the garden of your soul, in which the flowers of your virtues are all drooping; and this is to renew their primitive beauty, so that your soul may become His garden of delights, begging Him that after having been to you a source of living water, He may be to you a divine Sun, shining and beaming to dispel the mists and darkness of your souls.

"At other times, look upon yourself as a tree planted by the running waters which bears fruit in due season, and the more it is beaten by the winds, the deeper it strikes its roots into the ground. In the same manner, the more you are attacked by the winds of temptation, so much must your roots of profound humility strike deeper in the Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ. This adorable Heart asks of Its friends purity of intention, humility in operation, and unity in aspiration. Purity of heart and intention will render you the object of the loving complacency of the Sacred Heart of Jesus; humility will make Him reign in your heart, and preserve you in His friendship; and charity will make you reign in that adorable Heart."*

The way to inscribe our name in the Heart of Jesus.

Blessed Margaret Mary in one of her instructions to her novices said to them: "My dear children of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the grace which our Lord has begun to confer on you will raise you to a high perfection, provided you second it by faithful corres-

* *Partic. Admonit.* II., pp. 456, 385, 443.

pondence on your part. You must act so that your path may advance and increase like the breaking of the day. You must not be over-confident: if your names are written in this adorable Heart, it is as yet only in ink, which signifies the commencement of grace in you, sent to assist you to combat and conquer your imperfections. As gold in the crucible from earth, so our inclinations and actions must be purified in the furnace of His love from all that is earthly and human, and from all self-seeking. And when as time goes on this is all changed into characters of silver, which indicates purity of heart, you must not stop there leaving the work imperfect, but go on and attain the gold of charity, which inscribes your names in indelible characters. And then you will be as holocausts, all consumed in the ardent flames of the beloved Heart of Jesus. But it is love which must bring you to this. You must suffer through love, by offering continual violence to yourselves, mortifying and humbling yourselves through love, and rejoicing and being very glad when you find an opportunity of expressing your love to this sole love of our hearts. What I have just told you describes the beginning, the progress and the end of your life. The crown will not be given to beginners, nor to those who are in their course, but to those who are victorious, persevering to the end. . . . .

" Lastly, my dear sisters, I cannot sufficiently admire the goodness and liberality of this Sacred Heart in your regard.

It would seem that all its treasures are unfolded in order to enrich you, so much pleasure does It take in doing you good. . . . . As love expects a return, and will

have no other but this same love, God has engraved it in your hearts that you may render it back to Him, according to His desire. This same love must in return engrave the name of our Beloved, which can be done as follows:

"When you gain some signal victory over yourselves, whether by humility, by mortification, or in any way, and do some good acts of charity towards your neighbour, whether by bearing with him or excusing him, praising him or doing him some service, you will be writing so many letters of that adorable Name and engraving them in your hearts. But be faithful, persevering and fervent: I cannot say it too often, because the contrary would bring you so much harm." *

Invocation to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

"O most holy Heart, most august Heart, Master of all hearts, I love Thee, I adore Thee and I praise Thee; I thank Thee and I am all Thine. Thou art my strength, my support, my reward, my salvation, my refuge, my love and my all.

"O Heart of love, abide with me and in me; govern me, save me, change me wholly into Thee. Refuse me not the sweet title of daughter of Thy Heart, in which I desire to die to myself and to sin, in order to live no more save by Its life.

"Heart of my Jesus, reform my unfaithful heart. Grant that henceforth it may fasten itself to Thy love by its love, and may approach as nigh to Thee as in the past it has withdrawn itself from Thee; and as Thou art its Creator, be also, I beseech Thee, its crowner. Amen." †

* *Partic. Admonit.* II., p. 429.

† *Little Book of Prayers.* II., pp. 479, 474, 494.

15th Day.

Divine predilections of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

BLESSED Margaret Mary was from her tenderest infancy the object of the ineffable predilection of Our Lord Jesus Christ. The following words bear witness to it:

"See, My daughter," said this divine Master to her, if thou wilt find a father whom passionate love of his only son solicits to give signs of His love such as I have given thee of Mine. . . . I have chosen thee for My spouse, and we have mutually promised fidelity, when thou didst make Me the vow of chastity, which I inspired thee to make before the world had begun to divide thy heart, because I would have it pure of earthly affections. Then to preserve it for Myself I took away all malice from thy will, and placed thee under the care of My Blessed Mother, that she might make thee perfect according to My designs.

"I have become thy father, thy master and thy governor, from thy earliest childhood, giving thee continual proofs of the love of My divine Heart, in which I have established thy present and thy eternal dwelling. For greater assurance, tell me what stronger pledge of my love thou willest, and I will give it thee. Preserve in purity the temple of the Lord, for wherever it is, God will help it with a special presence of protection and love. I am thy governor, to whom thou

oughtest to give thyself up without care or anxiety for thyself, since thou wilt lack help only when My Heart lacks power; and I will be careful to reward or avenge whatever is done to thee, as also I will think of those who have trust in thy prayers, that thou mayest occupy and employ thyself wholly in My love. I have established My kingdom of peace in thy soul, and no one shall be able to disturb it, that of My love in thy heart, and it shall give thee a joy which no one shall be able to take from thee." *

Let us get Blessed Margaret Mary, thus prevented by the divine favours, to teach us the secret of making ourselves the object of the predilection of the Sacred Heart of Our Lord.

"The soul which is the most humble and the most despised shall be the foremost in this adorable Heart.

"The most detached from all things shall possess It the most entirely.

"The most mortified shall receive Its sweetest favours.

"The most obedient shall cause Its triumph.

"The most charitable shall be the most loved by It.

"The most silent shall be the most fully instructed by It." †

1. The most humble and the most despised shall be the foremost in this adorable Heart.

"Only the humble heart is capable of entering into the Sacred Heart of Jesus, of conversing with It, of loving It and being loved by It. The Sacred Heart of

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* *Life by her Contemp.* I., pp. 125, 126, 18, 23.
Life by herself. II., p. 344.
† *Partic. Admonit.* II., p. 451

our sovereign Master is an inexhaustible fountain, which ever seeks to pour its waters into humble and empty hearts, into hearts which cling to nothing that they may be ever ready to sacrifice themselves to Its good pleasure, whatever it may cost nature. The Heart of Jesus is pleased with the little and humble of heart, and gives great blessings to their labours. It takes pleasure only in souls which are dead to self and are all its own, and these find all in Him when they are nothing in themselves. When you are in humiliation be glad and rejoice, for then you will advance very far into the good graces of the Sacred Heart. Embrace with love all that will most humiliate you and bring you down to your nothingness, as the most proper means to exalt the meek and gentle Heart of Jesus, and to make yours in its turn reign in His.

"Methinks He does you a most singular favour in giving you the knowledge and desire of the love of your own abjection, for there is no more efficacious means for gaining and keeping the friendship of the Sacred Heart. It is a cordial, which is capable of giving the life of grace to your heart and to all your good actions. In a word, we say all when we say that it is the virtue of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, which only abases its greatness down to us in so far as It finds us annihilated in the love of our own littleness; and It will take care to raise you to union with Itself, in so far as this holy virtue withdraws your affections from all that tends to make a display before creatures or in yourself.

Oh! how great a treasure is the love of lowliness and our own abjection! What ought we not to do and

suffer in order to possess it! for the soul which enjoys it is in security, and nothing can be wanting to it, because the Almighty takes complacency in it. Look therefore upon this humble way as the true one which He has marked out for you, and the surest for reaching Him. What do you fear in so sure a way as that of humiliations, the best of which are those which we do not recognise?—for humility has this speciality that it disappears as soon as we perceive it in ourselves." *

An example from her life comes in here to confirm her words. "On the eve of the Visitation," she says, "at Matins, having made various useless efforts to sing at the Invitatory, and being unable even to follow the choir in the recitation of the Psalms, at the first verse of the *Te Deum* I felt myself penetrated through and through by a power to which all my own powers at once applied themselves, in a spirit of homage and adoration. I had my arms crossed inside my sleeves, when a divine light appeard lying on them in the form of a little child, or rather of a brilliant sun, and I said: 'My Lord and my God, by what excess of love dost Thou thus abase Thine infinite greatness?' 'I come, My daughter,' He said, 'to ask thee why thou so often beggest Me not to approach to thee.' 'Thou knowest, O my Sovereign, I answered, 'that it is because I am not worthy to approach to Thee, and much less to touch Thee.' 'Learn,' he said, 'that the more thou withdrawest into thy nothingness, the more My greatness lowers itself to find thee.' But fearing lest it might be an angel of Satan, I made Him this request: 'If it is really Thou,

* *Letters.* l.. cxi., cv., lxxiii., lxxvi.

O my God, enable me to sing Thy praises.' At the same instant I felt my voice restored, and stronger than ever. I continued the *Te Deum* with the choir, and the same the rest of Matins, nor did all the signs of love with which He honoured me make me less attentive to the Office. All I felt was that my interior was wholly and most strongly united to this divine presence, and occupied in honouring it. At the end He said to me: 'I wanted to test the motive for which thou didst recite My praises; and if thou hadst been for one moment less attentive in this I should have withdrawn from thee.' All this made so strong an impression on me, that it drove sleep from my eyes, and made me find the night very short." *

2. The most detached from all things shall possess It the most entirely.

"It is only in perfect detachment from yourself and from all that is not God that you will find true peace and perfect happiness; for when you have nothing you have all in the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Be poor in all things, and the Sacred Heart will enrich you. Empty yourself of all, and It will fill you. Forget yourself and abandon yourself to It; It will think and have care for you.

"I cannot say anything else to you except that the annihilation of yourself will lift you up to union with your sovereign good. In forgetting yourself you will possess Him, and in abandoning yourself to Him He will possess you. And what greater good is there than

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* *Life by her Contemp.* I., p. 50.

to be nothing to the world and ourselves, so as to be possessed by God and to possess Him alone." *

Salutations to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

"Hail, Heart of charity, work in me.
Hail, Heart of mercy, answer for me.
Hail, Heart most humble, rest in me.
Hail, Heart most patient, bear with me.
Hail, Heart most faithful, pray for me.
Hail, admirable and most venerable Heart, bless me.
Hail, desirable and most beauteous Heart, enrapture me.
Hail, illustrious and perfect Heart, ennoble me.
Hail, Sacred Heart, most precious balsam, preserve me.
Hail, Heart of Jesus, model of perfection, enlighten me.
Hail, divine Heart, source of all goodness, strengthen me.
Hail, Heart of eternal benedictions, call me." †

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* *Let.* xcvii; *Partic. Admonit.* II., p. 403; *Let.* cxii.

† *Little Book of Prayers.* II., p. 476.

16th Day.

Divine predilections of the Sacred Heart of Jesus—(*continued*).

3. The most mortified soul shall receive Its sweetest favours.

BLESSED Margaret Mary had, as she herself relates, an aversion for certain kinds of food. From the period of her noviceship, however, she determined to overcome it, saying to herself at once: "I must die or conquer"; and after having implored the help of our Lord before the Blessed Sacrament she generously accomplished the mortification, arming herself with this thought alone: "In love there must be no reserve." The great violence she had to do herself made her ill the whole day, but in the evening during her prayer Our Lord gave her a thousand caresses, filling her with consolations and sweetness, for the pleasure which He told her He had received from her by this mortification, which she had voluntarily imposed upon herself for His love. It was after this sacrifice that all the graces with which our Lord favoured her increased, and so inundated her soul that she was obliged to exclaim: "Stay, my God, this torrent of graces which overwhelms me, or enlarge my capacity for receiving them." *

"It would be impossible to describe the extent to which Blessed Margaret Mary carried her mortification, as well in sickness as in health: we may say that she

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* *Life by her Contemp.* I., p. 30.

was dead to all the pleasures of the senses. In order to honour the thirst which our Saviour suffered on the Cross, she abstained from drinking between Thursday evening and the following Saturday. She even passed fifty entire days without drinking, to honour the burning thirst of the Sacred Heart of Jesus for the salvation of sinners." * She owns that she found so much delight in an act of heroic mortification which she practised in attending on a sick person, that she "would have wished to meet daily with such occasions, in order to learn to overcome herself, and to have God alone for witness. He failed not to let her know the pleasure which He had taken in it; the next night He kept her two or three hours near the wound of His sacred side. She said that it would be impossible to describe the graces which this implanted deeply in her soul." †

4. The most obedient shall cause Its triumph.

We read in her life the following example of obedience. "In order to withdraw her from her great application to prayer, she used to be sent to work in the garden, or the kitchen, or the lowest offices, and was even set to take care of an ass in the orchard. She was made to pass her retreat before profession in this exercise, to moderate the flames of divine love which devoured her.

"One day as she was going to interrupt the conference with which our Lord was favouring her in order to run after the ass and its young one, our divine Saviour said to her: 'Leave them alone, they will do no

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* *Life by her Contemp.* I., p. 139. † *Ibid.* I., p. 108.

harm.' She obeyed, in simple faith. From our community-room these animals were seen running about the kitchen-garden, but on examination no trace of their passage could be discovered.

"My divine Master," she said, "kept me faithful company in the continual running to and fro which was necessary. It was at this time that I received greater graces than any which I had had before, particularly on the mystery of His Sacred Passion . . . . . which has given me so much love for the cross that I cannot live a moment without suffering—but suffering in silence without consolation or relief, and dying with this Sovereign of my soul, overwhelmed under a cross composed of all kinds of sufferings. This has lasted throughout my life, which by His mercy has all passed in these kinds of exercises, which are the exercises of pure love." *

Speaking of the virtue of obedience, Blessed Margaret Mary says: "As to the interior, you must faithfully obey the movements of grace in your acts of the virtues; and as to the exterior, you must lovingly obey those who have the power to command you, thinking of these words: 'Jesus Christ was obedient, and therefore I will obey to the last sigh of my life.' And your obediences must be to honour those of Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament. If you are faithful in doing the will of God in time, your own shall be accomplished during eternity. In truth it appears to me that all the happiness of a soul consists in conforming herself to the most holy will of God. It is there that our heart finds its peace, our soul

* *Life by her Contemp.* I., p. 37.

its joy and repose, since he who adheres to God is made one spirit with Him; and I believe it to be the true way of doing our own will, for His loving goodness delights in contenting the will in which He finds no resistance." *

5. The most silent shall be the most fully instructed by It.

"Always keep your interior in silence, speaking little to creatures, but much to God by works—suffering and acting for His love. Keep all your interior and exterior senses in the Sacred Heart of Our Lord by the profound silence which you impose on them: interior silence by cutting off all useless thoughts and reflections of self-love in order to prepare yourself to listen to the voice of the Spouse; silence concerning all that can tend to the praise or excuse of self, the blame or accusation of others; silence as to all the little outbreaks which unmortified nature would induce you to make in order to testify your satisfaction on joyful occasions or your discontent on painful ones; and this silence shall be to honour that of Jesus solitary in the Blessed Sacrament. By this means you will learn to converse with His Sacred Heart and to love It in silence." †

"The love of our dear abjection in the Heart of our Lord Jesus Christ suffices even for our honour of the mysteries of His holy death and Passion, which he desires that we should honour by preserving with Him a sacred silence on all occasions of humiliation and of suffering; for I assure you that nothing pleases me so much as that which He preserved so exactly in the

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* *Let.* xix., to Mother de Sourdeilles. † *Partic. Admonit.* II., p. 419.

whole course of His Passion. In imitation of Him let us only open our mouth to pray for those who afflict us." *

6. The most charitable shall be the most loved by It.

"You must meekly support the little weaknesses, the ill-humours and annoying defects, of your neighbour, without letting yourself be put out by the slight contradictions which they may cause you, but on the contrary doing him willingly all the services that you can; for this is the true means of gaining the good graces of the Sacred Heart.

"Seek out occasions of pleasing this Heart by the exercise of holy charity, by ever thinking and speaking well of your neighbour, assisting the poor according to your power, spiritually and corporally, regarding Jesus Christ in their person, doing nothing to any one which you would be unwilling for them to do to you." †

"Be patient with all in order to give every one, particularly the poor, confidence to approach you in their needs. Have all the world your friend and no one your enemy, as far as you can, in God."

A memory of Blessed Margaret Mary's childhood finds its natural place here. Speaking of these early years she says: "Our Lord gave me such a tender love for the poor that I would have wished to have no conversation except with them, and He impressed upon me so great a compassion for their miseries, that if it had been in my power I should have left myself nothing. When I had any money, I gave it to poor little children

* *Let.* c., to Sr. de la Barge. † *Partic. Admonit.* II., p. 437.

to induce them to come to me to learn their catechism and their prayers. This made them run after me, and sometimes I had so many of them that I did not know where to put them in winter, except in a big room from which we were all driven out occasionally. This was a great mortification to me, because I did not like people to see anything of what I was doing.

"I had an extreme repugnance for the sight of wounds. The first thing which I had to do was to set to work to dress and kiss them, in order to conquer myself, and I did not know how to begin. But my divine Master supplied so well for all my ignorances, that the wounds got healed in a short time without other ointment than that of His Providence, even when they were very dangerous; but I had more confidence in His goodness than in exterior remedies." *

A compact of love under the form of a prayer.

"I beseech Thee, O my sweet Jesus, to make me entirely conformed to that death of the senses which Thou dost lead in the Blessed Sacrament, in which Thou makest Thyself obedient unto death, in mystic manner, at the mere word of the priest, good or bad. Help me then, my Saviour, to honour Thine obedience and self-annihilation, by making myself humble and obedient to the full extent of the perfection which Thou askest of me. For Thy sake, O Jesus, I sacrifice my liberty and my own will to Thy most holy will, without reserve. I disown with all my heart, I renounce and detest, all the questionings, repugnances, discontent and murmurings

* *Life by herself.* II., p. 302.

which this my own will could prompt, through my proud self-love, in all that I am commanded or forbidden to do. This is a compact which my heart makes with Thy Sacred Heart, O my divine Jesus, namely, to do all through love and obedience, and to will to live and die in this exercise, by which I mean all that is necessary for my perfection. I beseech Thee to take possession of my heart, and of all in me that can glorify Thee for time and eternity. Amen." *

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* *Ancient Ms.* II., p. 501.

17th Day.

THE HEART OF JESUS A DIVINE PILOT TO WHOM THE FAITHFUL SOUL ABANDONS HERSELF IN THE MIDST OF THE STORMS OF LIFE.

"AS to entering into the Sacred Heart of our Lord, what can you fear since He invites you to go and take your repose there? Enter then into It as a traveller into a safe vessel, whose Pilot is pure love, and which will convey you prosperously over the stormy sea of this world, preserving you from its rocks and its tempests, which are the suggestions of our enemies, our passions, our self-love and vanity, the attachment which we have to our own will and judgment. When you feel troubled and agitated by some fear you must say to your soul: 'What dost thou fear, since thou bearest the Heart of Jesus and His fortunes, which Heart is the pure love, the treasure and the delight of heaven and earth?'" *

"And to maintain ourselves in this Divine Heart for ever, we must love It with a love of preference, as the one thing necessary for our heart, which we must gradually bring to a contempt and forgetfulness of all else. Oh! that we could understand how much souls that are called to this perfect despoliation and abandonment of themselves advance, when they faithfully

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* *Various Writings.* II., pp. 469, 457.

correspond to the call by entirely dying to every desire, satisfaction, curiosity and reflection upon self, and let themselves be guided by this divine Pilot in the secure bark of His loving Heart! It seems to me that we thus secure our salvation, which runs so great a hazard in this miserable and corruptible life. But when we are wholly consecrated and devoted to this adorable Heart, to love and honour It with all our power, abandoning ourselves to It entirely, It takes care of us, and in spite of all storms brings us safely into the port of salvation.

"So then I send you to the Sacred Heart of our good Master, that It may be Itself your guide and conductor. It well knows all that is required, and when we abandon ourselves to Its guidance and let It act, It takes us a long way in a short time, and we only perceive Its action by the way in which Its grace combats our immortified nature. The most sweet Heart of Jesus Christ should be your sole occupation, your meditation and devout entertainment, your book and entire direction. It should fill your memory, enligthen your understanding and inflame your will, that you may think of nothing else. Endeavour, I implore you, to enter fully into Its divine teachings and Its designs concerning you, that you may afterwards put them into practice.

"One thing alone is necessary, which is pure divine love in that of our own abjection, abandoning ourselves to the loving providence of the Sacred and loving Heart of Jesus, that It may guide and govern us according to Its good pleasure. It will take good care to supply what is necessary for our sanctification; if we but apply

ourselves to receive all duly according to Its designs, that is enough." *

Counsels on Detachment.

"Hold yourself ready and disposed to do and suffer everything in the silence of a soul perfectly detached, as I believe Our Lord wishes yours to be. Detachment as to the body, receiving indifferently sickness, labour or repose; detachment as regards the spirit, welcoming dryness, dulness of heart, desolation, and receiving them with the same thankfulness as you would do sweetness and consolation; ever keeping your soul in peace, making it act in naked faith without seeking for sensible relish, which as a rule only serves to stop you on the road to perfection.

"The third detachment is that of the heart, the seat of love and of the will, which you must so put to death in the Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ as to let this Heart will for you all that is of Its good pleasure, procuring for yourself neither pleasure nor suffering, but accepting contentedly all that It presents to you, whether sweet or bitter; since the same love it is which presents you both one and the other, in order to sanctify you according to its liking." †

"Remain in peace, given up and sacrificed to the Sacred Heart of Our Lord, which, I seem to dare to say to you, will never abandon you, but will take a particular care of you, in proportion as you confide in It and yield yourself up to It, by an inviolable fidelity in

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* *Letters* lxxxix., xxx., lxxiii., c.

† *Partic. Admonit.* II., p. 383.

the occasions where there is question of Its glory and of testifying to It your love." *

"How greatly are you indebted to the Sacred Heart of our good Master which has so much love for you! Love It then in return with all the love of which you are capable, and render to It the glory of every good. Be inviolably faithful to It, whatever you may suffer thereby, for it is rich enough to make up for all. That Divine Heart will let you feel the effects of Its liberality if you confide fully in Its loving kindness. Your heart should be the throne of your Beloved, by rendering Him love for love, in those acts of fidelity which He will let you know to be most agreeable to Him. Detachment for love, detachment in love, and all for love without any further reserve." †

The extreme care with which our Lord Himself conducted Blessed Margaret Mary.

From her childhood the little Margaret understood by experience how delightful it is for a soul to abandon herself to the guidance of our Lord. "For many years," she says, "I had properly speaking no other director than my sovereign Master, for from the time I began to know Him He took so absolute an empire over my will that He obliged me to obey Him in everything, so that I could not as it were help it. He Himself corrected me for my faults, however trifling they might seem, with a sweet severity. From that time I conceived so great a horror of sin, that I hid myself in order to weep at leisure when I perceived I had committed any

* *Let.* xviii., to Sr. de la Barge.
† *Partic. Admonit.* II., pp. 404, 384, 401.

slightest fault. I felt myself so strongly attracted to prayer, that I suffered much from being unable to get to know how to make it, having no intercourse with spiritual persons; and I knew nothing more of it than just the word, prayer, which enraptured my heart. At length I addressed myself to my sovereign Master; He taught me how He wished me to make it, and His lesson has served me all my life. He made me prostrate myself humbly before Him to ask Him pardon for all that I had done to offend Him, and then after adoring Him I offered Him my prayer, without knowing how to begin it. Then He presented Himself to me in the mystery in which I was to consider Him, and He kept my mind so closely engaged, while my soul and all its powers were absorbed in Himself, that I had no distractions. My heart was consumed with the desire of loving Him, and this created in me an insatiable desire of Holy Communion and of suffering.... and I would have passed whole days and nights without eating and drinking, or without knowing what I was doing, except consuming myself in His presence like a burning taper, rendering Him love for love...

"As I incessantly complained to my divine Master that I feared I might not be able to please Him in all that I did, because there was too much of my own will in it—inasmuch as I thought that only to be worthy of esteem which was done by obedience—and as I said to Him, 'Alas my Lord, give me then some one to guide me to you;' He answered me: 'Am I not sufficient for thee? what dost thou fear? Can a child so much loved as thou art by Me perish in the arms of an omnipotent Father? I will show thee later that I am a wise and

learned director, who know how to conduct souls without danger when they abandon themselves to Me, forgetting themselves.' " *

Act of union with the sentiments of the Sacred Heart in the most Blessed Sacrament.

" Jesus Christ, my Lord and my God, whom I believe to be truly and really present in the most holy Sacrament of the Altar, receive this act of most profound adoration to supply for the desire which I would have to adore Thee therein unceasingly, in thanksgiving for the sentiments of love which Thy Sacred Heart has there for me. I could not acknowledge them better than by offering to Thee all the acts of adoration, resignation, patience and love which this same Heart has made during Its mortal life, and eternally will make in heaven, in order to love, praise and adore Thee by It so far as is possible to me. I unite myself to that divine offering which Thou makest to Thy divine Father; and I consecrate to Thee all my being, beseeching Thee to destroy sin in me, and not to permit me to be separated from Thee eternally." †

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* *Life by herself.* II., pp. 296, 309.

* *Ancient Ms.* II., p. 498.

18th Day.

The Child of Love in the Heart of Jesus.

"OUR Lord having brought you forth on the cross with such pains, that He has covered Himself with wounds and blood to cure the wounds which you have inflicted on your soul, there is nothing which He desires so much as to put you in possession of His kingdom. He wishes to make you repose on His bosom like a beloved child, who abandons herself to the care of His adorable Providence, which cares for her and lets her want for nothing, and will not let her perish since He is all powerful. Abandon yourself therefore without reserve to His loving care, and give Him your whole heart. What he asks of you is that your life be conformed to His crucified life, by taking Him as the model of all your actions, and uniting all your steps to His; in order that you may no longer walk but in the path of His holy love." *

"We ought to fear nothing in His sacred arms, provided that distrusting ourselves we expect all from Him. Since the Sacred Heart loves you, what have you to fear, except that you may not make It all the return of love which It requires of you? This retnrn of love consists entirely, if I mistake not, in that very abandonment and forgetfulness of yourself. There is no love without suffering. He has clearly shown us this on the

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* *Various Writings.* II., p. 470.

Cross where he immolated Himself for our love, and He still does so daily in the most Blessed Sacrament of the Altar, in which His ardent desire is that we conform our life to His, which is wholly hidden and annihilated in the eyes of creatures. And since love makes lovers alike, if we love, let us form our life on the model of His.

"Love and do what you will: for he who loves has all. Do all by love, in love and for love, for it is love that gives value to everything. Love will not have a divided heart: it will have all or nothing. Love will render all things easy to you. So give back love for love, and never forget Him whom love has put to death for you. You will love Him only in proportion as you can suffer in silence, and prefer Him to the creature and eternity to time. Let us then belong entirely to the Beloved of our soul; let us give Him all our heart, our love, our affections, inclinations and tender emotions. There must no longer be any eager affection for any creature or for ourselves, but all for the Sacred Heart."*

Advice on loving confidence in our Lord.

"I rejoice greatly that our Lord invites you to abandon yourself wholly to Him. . . . Take therefore to yourself these words: 'Unless you become as a little child you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.' I think that this consists in becoming little by true humility of heart and simplicity of mind, receiving willingly, and as coming from the hand of your good Father, the humiliations and contradictions which will fall to your lot, without troubling yourself to look at

* *Partic. Admonit.* II., pp. 423, 457.

second causes. Look only at His loving Heart, which will never permit His adorable hand to execute anything in your regard that is not for His glory and your sanctification. Because He loves you He will often provide you with means of crucifying yourself, now by the hands of others, now by yourself, but in whatever way it may come, meet it with nothing on your part but silence and submission, saying: 'it is my heavenly Father who does it, that is enough for me.'" *

"Let us with filial confidence cast ourselves into His arms, which His love made Him extend on the cross to receive us. Let us often say to Him: 'My God, Thou art my Father, have mercy on me according to Thy great mercy; I abandon myself to Thee, reject me not, for I know that the child cannot perish in the arms of an Omnipotent Father.' At other times, looking at His goodness and His love, say to Him: 'O my good Father, make me worthy to accomplish Thy holy will, for I am all Thine.'" †

"Ah! if you could fully comprehend the ardent charity of Our Lord in your regard, you would easily see that all these permissions and appointments are only love. . . . He desires that you should make as many sacrifices to Him of your self-love and your own will as He supplies you occasions of contradicting and breaking it, till it is entirely destroyed and annihilated, to enable the will of this Divine Heart to reign in you. In this consists all your peace, which you cannot fully enjoy until the above is accomplished as far as depends on you." ‡ "The Heart of Jesus asks only for your

* *Partic. Admonit.* II., p. 394. † *Various Writings.* II., p. 460.
‡ *Partic Admonit.* II., p. 402.

confidence in His goodness to make you experience the sweetness and strength of His aid in your necessities —always in proportion to your confidence. Walk then simply with Our Lord, He will not let you be lost, because He loves you; confide in Him, forgetting and despising yourself. Be satisfied with loving Him and letting Him act; that by itself suffices."

The Infant Jesus presents Himself to Blessed Margaret Mary, to serve as her model.

Blessed Margaret Mary thus relates an apparition of the Blessed Virgin, with which she was favoured in one of her retreats: "My holy Liberatrix." she says, "honoured me with a visit, holding her Divine Son in her arms; she placed Him in mine, saying to me: 'Behold Him who comes to teach you what you must do.' On this I felt myself penetrated with a very sensible joy, and powerfully urged to lavish caresses upon Him, which He allowed me to do as much as I wished. When I was quite tired with loving Him, He said: 'Are you satisfied now? Let this serve for always, for I will have you given up to My power as you have seen Me in yours. Whether I caress you or afflict you you must act only according to My inspirations.' "*

Perhaps it was the remembrance of these raptures which brought to the lips of Blessed Margaret these words: "I desire to live in the Heart of my good Father like a child free from care, letting Him act with me and dispose of me according to His good pleasure,

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* *Life by her Contemp.* I., p. 196.

without other care of myself than to abandon myself entirely to Him and His loving Providence, letting myself be led in everything with the simplicity of a child, having no other view or desire in all that I do than to please Jesus Christ. I have no longer anything to think of as regards myself, for He taught me that He would never refuse me His care save when I began to care for myself. That this care is absent then, I have often experienced through my own infidelity, which led to results the exact contrary of my desires, but now I only think of myself so far as to fulfil the words which He has said to me so often: 'Let Me act.' The Sacred Heart of Jesus will do all for me if I let it act; It will will, love, desire for me, and will supply for all my defects." *

Elevations towards the Heart of Jesus.

"Absorb, I beseech Thee, O Jesus my sole love, all my thoughts, and withdraw my heart from all that is under heaven by the force of Thy love, more violent than fire and more sweet than honey. Let me die of love for Thy love, as Thou hast died for love of my love, Ah! Lord, so deeply wound this heart which is Thine. and pierce it with so many darts of love, that it may be unable to contain anything earthly or human. O Heart of Jesus, I languish with desire to be united to Thee, to possess Thee and to be lost in Thee, so as to live no more save by Thee, who art my abode for ever. It is in Thee, O Heart all worthy of love, that I will to love, act and suffer. Consume then in me all that there is

* *Let.* cxxxiii., to Fr. Rolin.

of myself; substitute what is of Thee, and transform me into Thee. O Heart most merciful, Heart most Sacred, Heart which will furnish an eternal enjoyment never palling but ever delighting, Heart which will form the recompense of the Blessed—Ah! how art Thou most desirable and most deserving of love!" *

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* *Little Book of Prayers* ·II., pp., 483, 479.

19th Day.

The soul should strive to make herself a Sanctuary agreeable to the Sacred Heart of our Lord Jesus Christ.

THE following is the account of a signal grace with which Blessed Margaret Mary was honoured on the feast of the Ascension. "When we went into choir to honour the moment when our Lord went up to Heaven, I found myself in presence of the most Blessed Sacrament, in a state of great interior silence. On a sudden, I saw a burning light which enclosed within itself my sweetest Jesus. Drawing near to me, He said to me these words: 'My daughter, I have chosen thy soul to be to me a heaven of repose on earth, and thy heart shall be a throne of delights to my divine love.' I said to Him from time to time during this sacred familiarity which He pressed me to have with Him: 'My God, amid all the caresses of Thy love I cannot forget the injuries that I have done Thee, or that Thou art all and I am nothing.'" *

Let us now hear Blessed Margaret Mary, when her heart had become a heaven of repose for her divine Spouse, teach us with sweet simplicity the means by which we may make our hearts an agreeable dwelling for Our Lord.

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* *Life by her Contemp.* I., p. 145.

"I invite you particularly to keep your heart prepared to receive the visits of Our Lord .... and for this purpose we must keep all our senses in solitude by holy interior recollection, banishing useless reflections and returns on self, which only serve to disturb us and withdraw our soul from that peace without which it can never be God's sanctuary. You must always look at God within yourself, because in so doing, all our faculties and powers, and even our senses, are forced to recollect themselves within ourselves, whereas in looking at Him out of ourselves, objects easily distract us. When we wish to have His love as our guest, we must empty our heart and detach it from all affection to creatures and to ourselves, for all that keeps us attached to itself steals us from Him and His pure love, which reigns in suffering and triumphs in humility in order to enjoy in unity." *

"You should always regard your soul as a sanctuary in which God dwells. On this account you must preserve it fom every slightest stain. You must further make your heart a throne for His love, and retiring thither with Him, you must entertain Him in silence, adoring and loving Him, with all your strength and power. Being His cherished spouse, you ought to take pains to make yourself all pure and innocent, so as to be pleasing to this your divine Beloved; this must be your only aim and end in all you do, and you must give yourself wholly to Him, without any reserve. The Sacred Heart of Jesus desires to be the object of all your complacency, and will have you take all your

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* *Various Writings.* II., p. 462.

pleasure in It, that you may deserve that It should take Its pleasure in you. As Jesus is jealous of your heart and desires to be the sole possessor of it, you must also be jealous of His, by loving him more than anyone else does if possible."*

Blessed Margaret Mary teaches her novices to make of their heart a chapel wholly consecrated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

"I think that you cannot give a stronger sign of love to this divine Heart, or one that is more agreeable to It, than to lodge It in the place of delights which It has built for Itself, namely, your heart, whence you must banish the idols so long adored—your pride, your self-will, your attachments to creatures. And after having driven out of this chapel all the enemies of the Sacred Heart, for so I name your enemies, you must cleanse and purify it from all stain, by removing all immortified passions and inclinations. Then you must spread out the carpet of a pure intention, that is, of doing everything to please the Sacred Heart.

"Then, by profound humility, you will place the foundations of the throne, which you will erect for the Sacred Heart thereon. It is pure divine love, amidst whose ardour that Heart is ever like a victim of holocaust, immolated and sacrificed to the glory of the eternal Father for our love.

"The adornment of this throne will be rich and precious, as It desires them and you may rightly have them. The principal must be made of the gold of holy

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* *Partic. Admonit.* II., pp., 422, 378, 396.

charity, which will bring you so dearly into the friendship of the Sacred Heart that It will let Itself be possessed by you as by Its well-beloved spouse, to whom It says all lovingly: 'Everythng that is Mine is thine, and all thine is Mine; for charity makes us one.'....

"The three powers of your soul are as it were three angels destined to pay it a continual homage and adoration. Your understanding must be occupied solely in knowing It, and your will in loving It and ceaselessly offering It the incense of a thousand holy affections, with the desire of pleasing It and of never being separated from It. Your memory's remembrances shall be but a continual acknowledgement of Its benefits...

"You must enter this chapel thrice a day. In the morning, to pay your homage of adoration and sacrifice to this Sacred Heart, as to your sovereign Liberator, to whom you will offer up all that you are going to do and suffer, and all the parts of your being, so that you will use them no more save to love, honour and glorify It, uniting yourselves to Its holy intentions, and removing all, that can displease It. At noon, you must enter therein to pay It your homage of love and prayer. You must discover to It all the wounds and miseries of your soul, as It is the sovereign remedy of your ills, able to supply all your needs. In the evening, you must enter into It to pay your homage of gratitude, to thank It for all Its benefits, and to ask Its pardon, with a lively sorrow for all the ingratitude and infidelities of which you may have been guilty, and with a firm resolution to die rather than offend It. And then you will make It a crown of the practices of the virtues which you have performed, and crown It therewith, in order to lessen

the sharpness of the pricks which It receives from the thorns of our sins, begging It to repair the evil which we have done by the good which It has done." *

Love is a prayer, and prayer is born of love.

"You ask me for a short prayer to testify your love to Him; as for myself, I know no other and I find no better than this very love itself, for everthing speaks when one loves, and even the actions which occupy us the most are proofs of our love. 'Love then,' as St. Augustine says, 'and do what you will;' and as we cannot love without suffering let us love and suffer at the same time, and not lose a moment, for all crosses are precious to a heart that loves its God and desires to be loved by Him. Let us then endeavour to render ourselves real copies of our crucified Love." †

Prayer to Our Lord as King in the Blessed Sacrament.

"I adore Thee, O Jesus, mighty King, on Thy throne of love and mercy. Receive me as Thy slave and subject, and pardon me, I beseech thee, my resistance and rebellion against Thy sovereign dominion over my soul. Ah! gentle King, remember that Thou canst not show mercy unless Thou hast subjects that are miserable. Extend then, I conjure Thee, Thy liberal hand, and fill up my extreme indigence with the precious treasure of Thy holy love, which is no other thing than Thyself, having first emptied me of all that wretched love of self and all those vain human respects which hold me as it were fastened and enchained. Come, O

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* *Partic. Admonit.* II., p. 454. † *Let.* xci., to Mother Dubuysson.

my sovereign King, to break my fetters and to deliver me from that evil servitude, establishing Thine empire in my heart. I wish to reign in Thine, by an ardent charity for my neighbour, speaking of him only with charity, bearing with him, excusing him, doing to him only what I would wish done to myself, never sullying my heart or my tongue with backbiting or ill will. I will not let myself be troubled by anything, in order that my King may find in me an empire of peace. Amen." *

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* *Ancient Ms.* II., p. 492.

20th Day.

Happiness of a soul which receives in the Holy Eucharist the Heart of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

BLESSED Margaret Mary was incessantly inflamed with the desire of receiving in the Holy Communion the God of her heart and the Heart of her God. From her very childhood this love for the Holy Eucharist had possessed her soul: "My greatest joy in leaving the world was in the thought that I should go to Holy Communion frequently, for this had been very rarely allowed me, and I should have thought myself the happiest person in the world, if I had been able to go frequently, and to pass nights alone before the Blessed Sacrament. It gave me such a sense of security, that although I was extremely timid I thought not of my fears when in that place of delights. On the eves of Communion I felt myself absorbed in so profound a silence that I had to do violence to myself to speak, on account of the greatness of the action which I was about to perform; and when I had accomplished it I would have wished neither to eat nor to drink, neither to see nor to speak, so great were the peace and consolation which I experienced. I hid myself as much as I could, in order to learn to love my sovereign Good who pressed me so strongly to render Him love for love."

This ardent love was to increase still more in the cloister. "I have so great a desire for Holy Communion,"

she says, " that if I had to walk on a road of fire barefoot it seems to me that my pains would be as nothing to me compared with the privation of Communion. Nothing is capable of giving me a sensible joy save this Bread of love, after the reception of which I remain annihilated before my God, but with so great a joy that sometimes during my thanksgiving my whole interior is in silence and profound reverence in order to hear the voice of Him who forms the entire contentment of my soul." *

" My sovereign has placed in my soul so great a desire of loving Him that it seems as if all that I see ought to be changed into flames of love, that He may be loved in His divine Sacrament. It is a martyrdom to me to think how little He is loved in It, and that there are so many hearts who refuse His pure love, who forget Him and despise Him. If I at least loved Him my heart would be comforted in its sorrow, but I am the most ungrateful and unfaithful of all creatures, for I lead a life wholly sensual, through love of self." † " The desire of dying urges me more than ever. I cannot make up my mind to ask of God years of life, unless it were on condition that that they should all be employed in loving the Sacred Heart of Jesus in silence and penance, never offending Him again, remaining day and night before the Blessed Sacrament, in which that divine Heart constitutes all my happiness here below. ‡

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* *Life by her Contemp.* I., p. 46.

† *Let.* xii., to Mother de Saumaise.

‡ *Let.* xxiv., to Mother Greyfié.

Power of the soul's desires over the Heart of Jesus.

"One Good Friday, feeling an ardent desire to receive Our Lord, I addressed to Him with many tears the following words: 'Beloved Jesus, I wish to consume myself in desiring Thee; and not being able to possess Thee this day, I will not cease to desire Thee.' He came to console me by His sweet presence, saying to me: 'My daughter, thy desire has penetrated so deeply into My Heart, that if I had not instituted this Sacrament of love I would do it now for the love of thee, in order to have the pleasure of dwelling in thy soul and taking My repose of love in thy heart.' This filled me with so lively an ardour that I felt my soul transported with delight, which could only find utterance in these words: 'O love! O excess of God's love towards so miserable a creature!' Our Lord also said to me: 'I take so much pleasure in being desired in the Sacrament of My love, that as often as the heart forms this desire, so often do I look on it lovingly, to draw it to Myself.' This thought impressed itself so strongly on me, that I endured great pain at seeing how little my Jesus is loved and desired in this august Sacrament. Especially was it an insupportable pain to me when persons stayed away from It, or spoke of It with coldness and indifference."*

One day when the desire of receiving Our Lord was tormenting me, I said to Him: 'My Lord, teach me what Thou wishest me to say to Thee.' 'Only these words,' He answered, 'My God, my only One and my

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* *Let.* lxvi., to Mother de Saumaise.

All, Thou art all mine and I am all Thine. These words will preserve thee from all kinds of temptations, they will supply for all the acts that thou wouldst like to make, and will serve as a preparation for thy actions.' " *

A Practice of Blessed Margaret Mary proper for souls consecrated to God.

She expresses as follows one of the graces with which Our Lord favoured her during a Retreat. "My Sovereign Master," she says, "of His divine mercy, poured forth His favours upon me with such profusion that it would be difficult for me to describe it. He espoused my soul in the excess of His charity, giving me to understand, that having destined me to render continual homage to Him as to a victim of sacrifice in the Blessed Sacrament, I was in this same aspect to immolate my being continually by love, adoration, self-annihilation, and conformity to the life of death which He leads in the Holy Eucharist. I was to fulfil my vows after this sacred model, in which He is so entirely stript of everything, that He has placed Himself in a state to receive from His creatures whatever they may please to give Him or do to Him.

"In the same way, by my vow of poverty, I must not only be stripped of the goods and satisfactions of life, but likewise of all pleasures, consolations, desires and affections, of all self-interest, letting things be given me or taken from me as if I were dead or insensible to everything. What greater obedience can there be than

* *Life by her Contemp.* I., p. 151.

that of my Jesus in the Holy Eucharist, where He comes the instant the sacramental words are pronounced, whether the priest be good or bad, or whatever use he intends to make of Him; suffering Himself to be carried into hearts sullied with sins of which He has so great a horror? So, in imitation of Him, he desires that I should abandon myself into the hands of my superiors, whoever they may be, to dispose of me as they may think fit, without manifesting the least repugnance, how contrary soever it may be to my own inclinations, saying: 'My Jesus was obedient even to the death of the cross, I will therefore obey even to the last sigh of my life, to render homage to the obedience of Jesus in the Sacred Host, whose pure white teaches me that we must be pure victims to be immolated to Him, spotless in order to possess Him, pure in body, heart, intention and affection, in order to be transformed wholly into Him. I must lead a life without curiosity, a life of love and privation, rejoicing to see myself despised and forgotten, in order to repair the neglect and contempt which my Jesus receives in the Sacred Host.'" *

Appeal to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

"O Heart most exalted, delight of the Godhead, I salute Thee from out the place of exile where I am; I invoke Thee in my misery, and call Thee to the help of my frailty. Most merciful, most compassionate and most tender Heart of my Father and Saviour, refuse not Thy help to my unworthy heart. O God of my heart, who hast created me to be the object of Thy love and the

* *Life by her Contemp.* I., p. 194.

subject of Thy unspeakable favours, O Heart of my God, come to me or draw me to Thee! Come, O most faithful, most tender, most sweet and most love-worthy of all friends, come to my heart. I summon Thee, by thine incomparable love and by Thy plighted word, to come and relieve me. Come, and let me not give Thee cause to leave me. Come, O life of my heart, O soul of my life, O only support of my soul, come to make me live by Thee and in Thee, to live a true life, O my sole life and all my good! Come, O my God and my all." *

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* *Little Book of Prayers.* II., pp. 479. 481.

21st Day.

Invitation to the love of the Sacred Heart, our Friend, in the Holy Eucharist

BLESSED Margaret Mary would have wished to move all souls to understand and to love the gift of His Heart which Our Lord has bestowed on us in the Holy Eucharist.

"Enter into this Sacred Heart," she says, "as if invited to the love-feast of your sole and perfect Friend, who desires to inebriate you with the delicious wine of His pure love. This alone can sweeten all your bitternesses, by disgusting you with all the false delights of earth, that you may find your pleasure only in the Heart of this dear Friend, who so lovingly says to you: 'All that is Mine is thine. My wounds, My blood and My sufferings are thine. My love renders our goods common. Let Me then possess thy whole heart, and I will inflame thy coldness and raise thy drooping spirits, which make thee so cowardly in My service and so tepid in My love.' Jesus Christ is the only true Friend of our hearts, which are made for Him alone, nor can they find true repose, joy or plentitude but in Him alone. He has taken our sins upon Himself, making Himself security for them to His Heavenly Father, who regarding Him under the form of a sinner has immolated Him to His most rigorous divine justice, although He was innocent. He willed to die in order to merit for us, through the excess of his love, an immortal

and blessed life, by delivering us from an eternally miserable death. Let us bless and thank Him for such ardent charity, for which we ought to consume ourselves with gratitude, making to Him a continual sacrifice of our whole being, by a homage of love and adoration to His sovereign greatness, which delights in our littleness. Considering Him thus as your Friend, you can tell Him all the secrets of your heart, disclosing to Him all your miseries and necessities, as to one who alone can remedy them, saying to Him: 'O thou friend of my heart, she whom Thou lovest is sick; visit me and heal me, for I know that Thou canst not at the same time love me and leave me in my miseries.'" *

"Ah! how happy are those souls, who have so completely forgotten themselves that they have no longer any love, look or thought but for this unique Friend of our heart! It appears to me that every other thought or occupation is but loss of time. This divine Love who reposes on our altars only preaches love to us, only wishes to fill us with love, so that through Himself we may render Him all the love that He expects from us—strong love, that does not allow itself to be beaten down, pure love, which loves without admixture or self-interest, crucified love, which has no joy but in suffering in order to be conformed to its Beloved, a love of preference, a love of self-forgetfulness and self abandonment, to let our Beloved act, and to let Him cut out, burn and annihilate in us all that displeases Him, we following Him blindly, without regarding ourselves or reflecting on ourselves to see what we are doing.

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* *Various Writings.* II., pp. 470, 462.

"O how good it is to love Him, this Lord so full of love! And once He has made a heart conceive ever so little how good and amiable He is, is it possible that such a heart can help loving Him, and quitting all to abandon itself to the power of this love?" *

Advice for drawing practical fruit from the Blessed Eucharist.

"Cast yourself often into the arms of the loving providence of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ, especially after Holy Communion, delivering and abandoning yourself wholly to the divine power of His love, to do whatever He pleases. I invite you to make to the loving Heart of Jesus Christ an entire donation of all your being, spiritual and corporal, and of all that you may do or may have done, in order that after having purified and consumed in it all that does not please Him, He may dispose of it at His good pleasure.

"Take your heart as it were in your hands, offer it, consecrate it, to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, in order that He may reign absolutely therein, and may teach you to love Him perfectly, never to displease Him voluntarily, and to bear the cross lovingly. Methinks you will greatly please the Sacred Heart of Jesus when you so give yourself up to It, that It shall be the sight of your eyes, the hearing of your ears, the light of your understanding, the affections of your will, the whole remembrance of your memory and the sole love of your heart; when you let It act for you according to Its desire, nor reserve to yourself aught but the earnest pleasing and

* *Letters* lxxxiv., xxvii.

loving of It above all things ; when you banish all the reflections of self love and the returns upon self, which are the obstacle to the operation of grace in our soul.

"You must be the Sunamitess, the well-beloved spouse, who will honour Jesus's life of love in the Blessed Sacrament. For this you must be attentive to render yourself all pure and innocent, to please this divine Spouse, having no other end or object in all that you do, but giving Him all without reserve. If you desire that He should give Himself to you, and if you desire to taste the sweetness of His loving intercourse, you must banish all reflections of self-love, all human respect.

"You must make thirty-three spiritual communions and one actual communion, as a reparation of honour to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and to ask His pardon for all the unworthy communions that are made by ourselves and by bad Christians. Take care to lose no communions, because we cannot give a greater satisfaction to our enemy than by keeping away from the One who takes that enemy's power from him. Remember never to blame nor accuse nor judge anyone but yourself, in order that your tongue which is destined to praise God, and is so often used as an instrument to conduct Him to your heart, may not become the instrument of Satan to poison your soul." *

Our Lord discovers to His spouse something of the mysteries which take place in a soul after Communion.

"On one occasion," relates Blessed Margaret Mary, "Our Lord showed me the evil treatment which He

* *Instructions and Various Writings.* II. pp. 399, 468, 407, 408.

received from a soul which communicated unworthily. I saw Him as it were bound, trampled under foot and insulted, while He said to me with a sorrowful voice: 'behold how sinners treat Me and insult Me.' Another time I saw Him in a heart which was resisting His love; He had His hands to His sacred ears, His eyes were shut, and He said: 'I will not hear what it says to Me nor regard its misery, that My Heart may be not touched, but may remain as insensible to it as it is to Me."

Our Lord was pleased also sometimes to manifest to the privileged spouse of His Heart the satisfaction which It received from certain persons. "Once particularly He showed her three who were going to communicate, saying to her: 'I will give them three kisses of peace, of love and of confidence.' And seeing the pleasure which Jesus Christ took in these holy souls, her transports of joy cannot be described." *

Blessed Margaret Mary's exercise for Spiritual Communion.

"Eternal Father, I offer Thee my understanding that it may learn to know nothing but Thee. My Sweet Jesus, I offer Thee my memory that it may remember only Thee. Most Holy Spirit of charity, I offer Thee my will that Thou mayest warm and inflame it with Thy divine love: adorn my soul with Thy seven gifts, and make me Thy temple of purity: fill me with Thy graces, and prepare my soul to receive my God spiritually.

"My divine Jesus, since my sins make me unworthy to receive Thee into my heart, receive me into Thine,

* *Life by her Contemp.* I., pp. 68, 116.

and unite me so perfectly to Thee that nothing may be able to withdraw me from Thee for a single moment. Let my misery and littleness be aborbed in the greatness of Thy mercies, and transform me wholly into Thee, that I may henceforth live only by Thee, in Thee and for love of Thee. Come then, sole object of my joy, come and take possession of this heart which is Thine own, and which cannot subsist a moment without Thee.

"I thank Thee that Thou hast deigned to give Thyself spiritually to my soul. I give myself also all to Thee, without reserve, that it may please Thee to do in me all that Thou willest to have done. Destroy this spirit of self-love; bring down all that exalts itself, and annihilate all that resists Thee." *

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* *Ancient Ms.* II., p. 492.

22nd Day.

The abysses of the Sacred Heart of Our Lord.

THE Sacred Heart of Jesus is an abyss of love, in which we must drown all the self-love that is in us, with all its evil productions, which are human respect, and desires of self-satisfaction.

"If we are in an abyss of privations and desolations, let us enter into this divine Heart; It is our whole consolation, and in It we must lose ourselves without desiring to feel Its sweetness.

"If we are in an abyss of resistance and opposition to the will of God, we must bury it in that of submission and conformity to the divine good-pleasure of Our Lord's Sacred Heart, casting into It all our resistances, in order to clothe ourselves with this blessed conformity as to all that It may wish to do with us.

"If you are in an abyss of dryness and incapability, go and bury yourself in the most Sacred Heart of Jesus.

"If you are in an abyss of weakness, falling at every moment, go and lose yourself in the strength of the Sacred Heart, which will strengthen and deliver you.

"If you are in an abyss of miseries, go and drown them in that adorable Heart, which is all full of mercy.

"If you are in an abyss of pride and vain esteem of self, bury it in that of the humility of the Sacred Heart.

"If you are in an abyss of ignorance, go and lose yourself in the gentle Heart of Jesus, where you will learn to love Him and to do what He desires of you.

"If you are in an abyss of infidelities and inconstancy, go and bury yourself in the abyss of firmness and stability of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

"If you are in an abyss of ingratitude for the great favours which you have received from God, go and throw yourself into the divine Heart, which is a source of gratitude, and which will fill you therewith if you ask.

"If you find in yourself an abyss of touchiness and anger, go and drown it in that of the amiable Heart of Jesus, that It may make you meek and humble.

"If you are in an abyss of distractions, go and bury them in the abyss of tranquillity of the Sacred Heart, which will infallibly give you the victory over them. If you are fighting bravely, you can plunge yourself therein as in an abyss of purity and of consolation, to purify your intentions, and to immolate your own desires and aims.

"If you are in an abyss of darkness, It will clothe you with Its light, in which you must let yourself be led as if you were blind.

"When you find yourself cast down into an abyss of sadness, go and drown it in that of the divine joy of this Sacred Heart, in which you will find a treasure which will relieve all your sadness and affliction of spirit.

"When you are in trouble and disquiet, go and bury yourself in the peace of this adorable Heart which no one can take from you.

"Often plunge yourself in the charity of this most sweet Heart, that you may do nothing to your neighbour which may ever so little wound this dear virtue, doing nothing to others which we would not wish them to do to ourselves.

"If you are in an abyss of fear, lose yourself in that of confidence in the Sacred Heart, and there you will make love cast out fear." *

Vow of perfection.

We here extract some of the heroic engagements which Blessed Margaret Mary had contracted under the safeguard of obedience.

"A vow made on the Eve of All Saints, to bind, consecrate and immolate myself more strictly, absolutely and perfectly to the Sacred Heart of our Lord Jesus Christ.

"O my only love! I will endeavour to keep in subjection and submission to Thee all that is in me, by doing what I shall believe to be the most perfect, or the most glorious to Thy Sacred Heart, to which I promise that I will spare nothing of all that is in my power to do or suffer, to make It known, loved, and glorified. I will neither neglect or omit any of my exercises, or observance of my rules, unless for charity, or true necessity, or obedience—to which I submit all my promises.

"Whatever treatment I may receive, I will suffer it in silence and without complaint. I will avoid no suffering or trouble, whether of mind or body, no humiliations, contempt nor contradictions. I will neither seek nor

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* *Various Writings.* II., p. 463-5.

procure for myself any other consolation, pleasure or satisfaction than that of having none in this life. When Providence presents such to me I will take them simply and not for the pleasure, which I will interiorly renounce, whether it be that which nature takes in satisfying its necessities, or of any other kind, and I will not let myself stop to think whether I am pleased or not, but will rather love my Sovereign who gives me this pleasure.

"I abandon myself wholly to the Sacred Heart of our Lord, to be consoled or afflicted according to His good pleasure, not interfering in any way with myself, contenting myself with adhering to all His holy operations and dispositions, looking upon myself as His victim, always to be in a continual act of immolation and sacrifice according to His good pleasure, attaching myself to nothing but to love Him, and to content Him by suffering in silence. I will never enquire about the faults of my neighbour, and if I am obliged to speak of them, I will do it in the charity of the Sacred Heart of our Lord Jesus Christ, asking myself whether I should be pleased that this thing should be done to me or said of me; and when I see my neighbour commit some fault, I will offer to the eternal Father a contrary virtue of the Sacred Heart to atone for it.

"I will regard all those who afflict me or speak ill of me as my best friends, and I will seek to render them all the services and all the good that I can. I will try not to speak of myself, or very briefly, and never, if possible, to praise or justify myself. I will ask the friendship of no creature save when the Sacred Heart of Jesus inspires me to do so for love of It. I will not voluntarily dwell

on any thought, I do not say bad but useless. I will regard myself as a poor beggar in the house of God, who must be under all, and who is employed and helped for charity's sake. I will think that I am always treated too well.

"I will endeavour to render my actions and words glorious to God, edifying to my neighbour and salutary to my soul, by a constant fidelity in the practice of the good which my divine Master tells me He wants from me, never failing voluntarily in this if I can help it; and I will not pardon any deviation from this without imposing some penance on myself." *

The exercises of divine love reduced to unity.

"In the multitude of all these things," adds Blessed Margaret Mary, "I was seized with so great a fear of failing in them that I should not have had the courage to engage myself to them, unless I had been fortified and reassured by these words which were spoken to me in the very depths of my heart: 'What dost thou fear, since I have answered for thee, and have made myself thy security?"

The unity of My pure love will take the place of attention in the multiplicity of all these things. I promise thee that it will repair the faults that thou mightest commit in them, and will itself exact satisfaction from thee.' These words impressed me with so great a confidence and assurance of safety, that notwithstanding my great frailty I no longer fear, having placed my confidence in Him who can do all things, from whom I hope for all, and nothing from self.

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* *Life by her Contemp.* I., p. 249.

"We see by this vow what grace can effect in a generous and faithful soul; and what that same grace does in a heart inflamed with the pure love of Jesus Christ.

"This sweet Saviour said to her: 'What obligation soever thy love imposes upon thee of thinking at every moment of the many things which it embraces, know that thou wilt satisfy for everything by loving Me without reserve and without interruption. Apply thy thoughts and thyself to love Me perfectly, to please Me solely in all things, and on all occasions. Let My love be the object of all thine actions, of all thy thoughts, and of all thy desires.

"Apply thyself to love Me only in order to render thyself worthy of loving Me daily more and more. I assure thee that without troubling thyself about anything else, thou wilt do even more by the exercise of holy love than thou hast promised by thy vow.' This is properly the meaning of those admirable words: 'The unity of my pure love will take the place of attention in the multiplicity of all these things.'" *

Prayer of union with Our Lord at the moment of Consecration in holy Mass.

"My sweet Jesus, I unite my soul to Thine, my heart and my mind, my life, my intentions, to Thine, and thus united I present myself to Thy Father. Receive me, O eternal Father, by the merits of Thy divine Son, which I offer to Thee with the priest and the whole Church. Look on me only as hidden in His wounds, covered with His blood and laden with His merits. It is thus that I

* *Life by her Contemp.* I., p. 252.

present myself to Thee, that thou mayest not reject me from before Thy face, but receive me into the arms of Thy paternal goodness, and grant me the grace of salvation. O my God, I give Thee thanks for all Thy benefits, for Thy death and Passion, and for the institution of Thy holy Sacraments, particularly that of our altars." *

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* *Ancient Ms.* II., 491.

23rd Day.

Dispositions with which Blessed Margaret Mary received the graces of Our Lord.

IT was with sentiments of the purest love that Blessed Margaret Mary received the divine favours.

"One Friday," she says, "having received my Saviour, He drew me to the wound of his Sacred Side, holding me there closely pressed for the space of three or four hours in delights that are beyond description. And I kept saying to him: 'O my love! I willingly quit these extreme pleasures, to love Thee for the love of Thyself, O my God!' * When our Lord wished to favour me with a new cross, He prepared me for it by an abundance of spiritual pleasures so great, that it would have beeen impossible to support them had they lasted; and I said during that time: 'O my only love, I sacrifice to Thee all these pleasures. Keep them for those holy souls who will glorify Thee for them more than I, who desire nothing but Thyself, stripped of all things upon the cross, where I would love Thee alone for the love of Thine own self. Take then from me all the rest, that I may love Thee without admixture of self-interest or of pleasure.'" †

In addition to all the graces which our Lord had heaped upon her, He added that of giving her a special

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* *Life by her Contemp.* I., p. 57. † *Life by herself.* II., p. 367.

angel to assist her. "My daughter," he said to her, "I will give thee a faithful guardian who shall accompany thee everywhere, assist thee in all thy wants, and prevent thine enemy from prevailing against thee." "This faithful guardian of my soul," she writes, "strengthened me by his familiar communications. He said to me on one occasion: 'I will tell you who I am, in order that you may know the love that your Spouse bears you: I am one of those who are the nearest to the throne of the divine Majesty, and who partake the most in the ardours of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ, and my design is to communicate them to you as far as you are capable of receiving them.' On another occasion he said: 'Take care that no grace or familiar caress that you receive from our God ever make you forget what He is, and what you are, for otherwise I would myself endeavour to annihilate you.' When our Lord honoured me with His divine presence, I no longer perceived that of my holy angel. Having asked Him the reason, He told me that my angel prostrated himself in profound respect during that time, in order to render homage to the sovereign greatness abased to my littleness; and in fact I saw him in this posture when I was favoured with the loving caresses of my heavenly Spouse. I found Him ready to assist me in my necessities, never having refused anything that I asked Him." *

Impressions of the divine presence in the soul of Blessed Margaret Mary.

"Our Divine Saviour," she says, "having honoured me with one of His visits, told me that He would bestow

* *Life by her Contemp.* I., p. 126.

on me a new grace, still greater than those which He had already conferred on me, namely that I should never lose sight of Him, but always have him intimately present; a favour which I regard as the height of all those which I have till now received from His infinite mercy, since from that time this Saviour is always intimately present to me. He instructs me, He supports me, He admonishes me of my faults, and He ceases not to increase in me, by His grace, the ardent desire of loving Him perfectly, and of suffering for His love. This divine presence inspires me with so much respect, that when I am alone I am obliged to prostrate myself with my face to the ground, and to annihilate myself, so to speak, in presence of my Saviour and my God, especially when I think what I am, that is to say, the most unworthy and meanest of all His slaves, and one who assuredly does not merit the rank of servant of Jesus Christ." *

Giving an account of the most interior sentiments of her soul, she expresses herself thus; "Everything afflicts and torments me, in that I cannot love my only Love who continues to gratify me with his loving presence ... It is as if a powerful monarch, eager to exercise his charity, should cast his eyes upon all his subjects in order to select the poorest, the most miserable, the most destitute of all things, in order that having found her, he might enrich her with the profusion of his favours and liberalities. The greatest of these might be, if this powerful monarch were to abase Himself so as to walk always by the side of this poor miserable creature, carrying a light in his hand, and all glorious in his

* *Let.* cxxvi., to Fr. Rolin.

royal purple, and if then, after showing himself, he should hide this light in the darkness of night, in order to allow the poor thing to approach him with confidence, so as to hear him and talk to him with intimacy. Oh! if after all this that favoured one were to turn her back upon her benefactor, and become unfaithful to him, and he to punish her, made use of no other means than to display the light which he held hidden, so as to show her what she was and what he was!—he shining with beauty, and she covered with mud, and wounds, and filth—and she saw at the same time the enormity of her malice and ingratitude opposed to the goodness of this sovereign!... Such is something like the way in which our Sovereign acts with His unworthy slave.

"It is true that the divine presence acts upon me in various ways. Sometimes it raises me to the height of every good, with an enjoyment of it which surpasses all description, and I have no other words than these: 'My love, my life, and my all! Thou art all for me and I am all for Thee.' At other times it lowers me down to the very centre of my nothingness, when I suffer the deepest confusion, seeing this abyss of all misery close to that abyss of all greatness and perfection. On other occasions God impresses Himself on me in such a way that I seem to have no other being or life but Himself, and this sometimes occurs in a most painful manner, which makes me continue saying: 'I am willing to suffer all without complaining, since pure love preserves me from fear.' Other times He seems to me to be as a calm water in which the sun mirrors itself with delight...

"God is an incomprehensible abyss of all good. All my glory ought to be, as He has taught me, in regarding

myself henceforward only as the plaything of the good-pleasure of His adorable Heart, which is all my treasure; for I have naught but my Lord Jesus Christ. Often in fact does He say to me: 'What wouldst thou do without me? thou wouldst be poor indeed.' As to the other graces and favours which I receive from His liberal goodness, I own that they are very great, but the Giver is worth more than all His gifts; and my heart cannot love or attach itself to anything but Himself. All the rest is nothing, and very often serves only to hinder the purity of love, and to make a third * between the soul and its Beloved, who wishes to be loved without admixture or self-interest." †

Blessed Margaret Mary's outpourings of gratitude and humility.

"Ah! how good and merciful Our Lord is to me!.... His conduct is to me like that of a father infatuated with the tender love which He feels for his little child... Never have I found my God so good towards me; He does not withdraw from me, in spite of my great infidelities, and truly I have nowhere to go but to His adorable Heart, which everywhere makes Itself my defence and security.

"Oh! how great are His liberalities! Often they leave me no other expression than *Misericordias Domini in æternum cantabo!*' But this is almost all that I can say of them, for I must acknowledge sincerely that I love my Sovereign more than His gifts and favours, and occupy myself more with Him than with them, which I esteem

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* *Un entre-deux.* † *Let.* xii., to Mother de Saumaise.

only in Him, and because they come from Him. And unless obedience command me I hardly reflect on them, still less speak of them, not being able to do so without extreme violence, because my life is so criminal that it makes me groan before God. It seems to me that I commit a great crime in speaking of myself, since I see myself so wicked, low and contemptible that I am often astonished not to find the earth opening under my feet in order to swallow me up, because of my great sins.

"I would wish never to speak of the great graces which our Saviour has bestowed upon me, since I never think of them without suffering extreme pains at the sight of my ingratitude, which would undoubtedly have precipitated me into hell, if the mercy of my divine Saviour, and the all powerful intercession of the Blessed Virgin had not disarmed, so to speak, the justice of God in my regard. To say what I think—I never reflect on these great graces without an extreme fear lest after having deceived myself I deceive also those to whom I am obliged to speak. I incessantly ask of God that He would give me the favour of being unknown, annihilated and buried in eternal oblivion; I regard this grace as the chief of all that He has bestowed on me . . . Alas! I have but one sole business, which is to love; I have only to forget and destroy self, since everything lies in the love of God and the hatred of ourselves. And this affair seems to me of such great importance, that I have never enough time to employ in it. *

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* *Letters* lxxxiii., lxxxv., xxxviii., cxxvi.

Offering of the merits of our Lord Jesus Christ.

"My God, I offer thee Thy beloved Son as a thanksgiving for all the graces Thou hast bestowed upon me; for my petition, my offering, my adoration, all my resolutions; in fine I offer Him to Thee as my love, and my all. Receive Him, O eternal Father, for all that Thou desirest of me, since I have nothing to offer Thee which is not unworthy of Thee, except Him the possession of whom Thou givest me with so much love."*

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* *Life by her Contemp.* 1., p. 63.

24th Day.

Sacred Rigours of Divine Love.

"THIS one love of my soul showed me in Himself two sanctities, the one of love, the other of justice, each very rigorous in its own way, and both to be exercised continually in me. The first would make me suffer a kind of purgatory, very painful to bear, in order to relieve the holy souls who are therein detained, whom He would permit according to His pleasure to address themselves to me. As for His sanctity of justice, so terrible and formidable to sinners, it would make me feel the weight of its just rigour by making me suffer for sinners, 'and this particularly,' He said, 'for those souls who are consecrated to Me, for whom I will make thee see and feel as time goes on, what thou wilt have to suffer for My love.'" *

"In the first solitude after my profession, this divine sanctity weighed upon me and made me feel its presence so strongly during the first two or three days, that it made me incapable of making my prayer and of supporting the interior pain which I felt. I experienced such a hopelessness and such a pain on appearing before my God, that if the same power which was making me suffer had not held me up, I would have wished a thousand times to lose myself in some bottomless abyss, to destroy myself and if it had been in my power to annihilate my-

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* *Life by herself.* II., p. 319.

myself. Yet spite of all, I could not withdraw from this divine presence, and everywhere it pursued me as if I were a criminal about to receive condemnation, but with so great a submission to the divine will of my God, that I was ever disposed to accept all the penalties and pains which it pleased Him to send me, with the same satisfaction as I would do the sweetness of His love.

"Once after having long suffered under the weight of the sanctity of God, I lost my voice and my strength. I felt such confusion at appearing before creatures that death would have been sweeter to me. Holy Communion was so painful, that it would be difficult to express the pain which I endured in approaching it, although I was not allowed to keep away, since it was Himself who made me suffer this state and forbade me to quit it. I could say with the Prophet that tears were my bread day and night. Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament, who was my only refuge, treated me with such indignation, that I suffered a species of agony, and could not remain before It but with an extreme violence; and if I went into His presence outside the hours of obligation, saying: 'where wouldst thou have me go, O divine justice, since thou accompaniest me everywhere?' —I entered and left without knowing what I was to do and without finding other repose than that of grief.

"Another time I felt the sanctity of my God so strongly impressed upon me, that I seemed to have no longer any strength to resist, and could only say these words: 'holiness of my God, how terrible art thou to criminal souls!' At other times: 'O my Lord and my God, support my weakness, that I may not give way under this heavy burden of the enormity of my sins, for which

I have deserved all the rigour of Thy justice.' He simply made me hear these words: 'I let thee feel but a trifling sample of it, for just souls hold it up lest it fall on sinners.'" *

On coming out of a terrible illness, from which she was freed by the voice of obedience, Blessed Margaret Mary wrote: "My cross was changed into an interior one, the weight of which I confess to you that I could not long have borne, unless the same hand which afflicted me had made itself my strength; for it seems to me that His justice made me feel a little taste of hell—or rather of purgatory, for I had not lost the desire to love God. I cannot express myself as to this, not being able to describe what I felt, unless by telling you that I was like a person in agony dragged with cords to the places of her various duties, which are our exercises. I felt in myself no spirit, will, imagination or memory; all was gone out of me; I had no longer any strength, and all my pains so completely possessed me that they reached to the very marrow of my bones. In a word, all suffered in me, while I felt only an entire submission to the holy will of my God, whose designs I adore. But as it would be difficult to tell you all the course of this state of feeling, or all that passed in it, I will simply say that it was represented to me as a slight radiation and participation of what Our Lord suffered in the garden of Olives, and I said with my Saviour: 'not my will, but Thine, O my God, be done, cost me what it may,' for I was resolved to suffer unto the end with the help of His grace." †

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* *Life by her Contemp.* I., pp. 55, 58.
† *Letter* xx., to Mother de Saumaise.

Elsewhere she says again: "This sanctity of love pressed me so strongly to give it some return, that I could find no sweeter repose than to feel my body weighed down with sufferings, my spirit in all kinds of desolation, and my whole being in humiliations, contempt and contradictions. They failed me not, by the grace of God, who could not leave me a moment without them, either within or without me. When this wholesome bread was less plentiful, I had to seek some other by mortification, and my sensitive and proud nature furnished me plenty of material. My sovereign Master did not wish me to lose a single opportunity; and if I did, on account of the great violence which I had to do myself to overcome my repugnances, He made me pay doubly for it. When He wanted something from me, He urged me so vehemently that it was impossible for me to resist Him; and this caused me much suffering, because I should often have liked to do so. He took me by all that was the most contrary to my nature and inclinations, in opposition to which He would have me always walk." *

Holy alarms of Blessed Margaret Mary.

This fragment of a letter from Blessed Margaret Mary to Mother de Saumaise † depicts the crucifying dispositions in which God was pleased sometimes to place her in order to purify her love:—

"I needs must say a little word about your poor unworthy daughter, who loves you more tenderly than ever. I think that she is all suffering and all pain; she is without remedy, without refuge, without help, save

* *Life by herself.* II., p. 336. † *Letter* xxxvii.

from this divine Heart. I have made myself undeserving of Its favours by my ingratitude and infidelities, although It does not cease to be as liberal and merciful to me as ever. This is what increases my torture, for I do not know whether it is not the enemy who attacks my poor heart with this most painful thought—that all is to my destruction, and that God does not give such graces to so wicked a creature, who has led so criminal a life, and who by her vain hypocrisy has deceived creatures; and in particular it seems to me that I could not long bear the sight without dying of grief, did I not feel myself at the same time strengthened by the presence all round about me of an invisible power, which drives away those infernal furies who only seek to take from me the peace of my heart; as Our Lord has assured me, if I deceive myself not. Then it comes to my mind that it is a false peace, which arises merely from the hardening of a heart insensible to its own misfortune. But oh! my good mother, could it be possible for this most Sweet Heart to bear to deprive that of Its unworthy slave of loving It eternally? Tell me, I conjure you, for my consolation, what you think of it."

What sin is in the light of God.

"My divine Master once gave me this lesson. After some fault which I had committed, He said: 'Know that I am a Master holy and teaching holiness. I am pure, and cannot bear the slightest defilement . . . . . I will have thee know that I cannot endure tepid and cowardly souls, and that if I am gentle in supporting thy weakness, I shall not be less severe and exact in correcting and punishing thy infidelities.' This He has made

me fully experience all my life ; for I may say that He has not let pass the smallest fault in which there was ever so little self-will or negligence, without reproving and punishing me for it, though always in His infinite mercy and goodness. I confess, however, that nothing has been more painful to me than to see Him in any degree whatever irritated against me. All other pains are nothing in comparison." *

A vision of Our Lord, laden with His Cross and all covered with wounds, contributed still further to impress on the heart of Blessed Margaret Mary a lively horror of sin. "I began," she says, "to understand better the gravity and malice of sin, which I detested so earnestly in my heart, that I would rather a thousand times have cast myself into hell than commit a single one voluntarily. 'O evil sin,' I said, 'how detestable art thou in that thou injurest my sovereign good!' In truth, my Beloved puts so great a dread of it into my soul, that I would prefer to see my soul abandoned to the fury of all the demons to seeing it stained with any sin, however slight.

"Great as my faults may be, this sole love of my soul never deprives me of His divine presence, according to His promise. But He makes it so terrible to me when I have displeased Him in anything, that any torment would be more desirable to me, and to any I would rather sacrifice myself a thousand times, than bear this divine presence and appear before the sanctity of God with my soul sullied by any sin. At such a time I wanted to hide myself and flee away if I could ; but all my efforts were

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* *Life by herself.* II., p. 323.

fruitless, as I found everywhere what I was flying from, with such frightful torture to me that I seemed to be in Purgatory, since all suffered in me with no consolation or desire of seeking any, till I cried sometimes in my grievous bitterness: 'Oh! how terrible it is to fall into the hands of a living God!' Such was the way in which He cleansed away my faults, when I was not sufficiently prompt and faithful in punishing myself for them.

"... But alas! what could I suffer that could equal the greatness of my crimes, which keep me ever in an abyss of confusion, since that my God has made me see the horrible appearance of a soul in mortal sin, and the gravity of sin, which attacking a goodness infinitely worthy of love is extremely offensive to it. This sight afflicts me more than all other pains, and I would rather with all my heart have commenced to suffer all those that were due for all the sins I had committed, using them as a safeguard and obstacle against the commission of sins, than have been so unhappy as to have committed them, even had I been assured that my God, of His infinite mercy, would pardon them without giving me over to those pains." *

An act of Pure Love.

"Graciously listen, O most sweet Heart of my Lord Jesus Christ, to the petition which I make and the request which I present to Thee in my own behalf, unworthy and miserable sinner that I am, in asking Thee for my perfect conversion.

"I detest sin with so great a horror, that I would choose rather to be buried in hell than ever return to it; and if

* *Life by herself.* II., pp. 366-8.

Thou wouldest condemn me to the flames let it be without reserve to those of Thy pure love. Cast me into that ardent furnace in punishment for all my perfidies. And if the excess of Thy mercies were to urge Thee to do me some further grace, I ask no other than this sweet punishment of love. But grant, I beseech Thee, that I may be consumed therein, so as to be transformed into Thee. And to take Thy vengeance on me for that I have not loved Thee when I loved myself so inordinately, pierce and transpierce a thousand thousand times my ungrateful heart with the dart of Thy pure love; so that it may no longer be able to contain any thing that is earthly or human, but may be filled solely with Thy pure love, which may leave me no other liberty but that of loving Thee in suffering and in the entire accomplishment of Thy holy will. These are the graces which I ask of Thee, O Heart most Sacred and most worthy of all love, and these I conjure Thee to grant to me, and to all hearts that are capable of loving Thee, for whom I ask that they may live and die in the same love. Amen." *

* *Ancient Mss.* II., 496.

25th Day.

The love of the Sacred Heart inspires zeal for the salvation of Souls.

ON a day of Communion, when Blessed Margaret Mary was making her thanksgiving with the desire of doing something for her God, the Beloved of her soul asked her interiorly whether she would not be glad to suffer all the pains deserved by sinners, in order that He might be glorified in all those souls. "At the same time," she says, "I offered Him my Soul and my whole being in sacrifice, to do His divine will; even if my pains were to last till the day of judgment, provided that He were glorified I should be content." *

"My Sovereign made known to me that when He was ready to abandon any of these souls for whom He wanted me to suffer, He would cause me to endure the feelings of a reprobate soul, by making me experience the desolation in which it finds itself at the hour of death. I have never experienced anything more terrible, and find no words in which I could express it. Casting myself down with my face on the ground, I would say: 'Strike, my God, cut off, burn, consume all that displeases Thee; spare neither my body, my life, my flesh nor my blood, provided that Thou save that Soul.' My Sovereign has often made me enter into these painful dispositions, and once when He showed me the

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* *Life by her Contemp.* I., p. 32.

chastisements which He was going to inflict on some souls, I threw myself at His sacred feet, saying to Him: 'O my Saviour! discharge on me all Thy wrath, and efface my name from the Book of Life, rather than let those souls be lost that have cost Thee so dear.' He answered me: 'But they do not love thee, and they will not cease to afflict thee.' 'It matters not, my God, provided that they love Thee. I will not cease praying to Thee to pardon them.' 'Let me alone,' He said, 'I cannot endure them any longer.' But clinging still more closely to Him—'No, my Lord,' I said, 'I will not leave Thee till Thou hast pardoned them.' Then He said to me: 'I am willing to do so, if you will be their surety.' I answered: 'Yes, my God; but I will pay Thee only with Thine own goods, which are the treasures of Thy Sacred Heart.' With this He was appeased." *

"On another occasion five hearts were shown to me which this loving Heart was ready to reject, regarding them no longer but with horror. Far from wishing to know who they were, I asked to be left in ignorance. Still I shed many tears, saying: 'O my God, Thou mayest destroy and annihilate me, but I will not leave Thee until Thou hast granted me the conversion of these hearts.'

"On another occasion Our Saviour added: 'Take upon thyself this burden; share in the bitternesses of My heart; shed tears of sorrow over the ingratitude of these hearts which I have chosen to consecrate them to My love: or, on the other hand, let them perish in their misery and do thou come and enjoy my delights. But

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* *Life by herself.* I., pp. 358-9.

turning away from all sweetness, I gave free course to my tears, feeling myself charged with these hearts which were going to be deprived of love, and having freedom of choice given me, and ever hearing the invitation to go and rejoice in holy love, I prostrated myself before the Sovereign goodness, presenting Him these hearts in order that they might be penetrated with His divine love; but it was necessary first to suffer much, and hell itself is not more horrible than a heart deprived of the love of my Well-beloved.' * Under the influence of the ardent zeal with which she was inflamed, Blessed Margaret Mary cried out: 'My Lord and my God, Thy mercy must needs find place in Thy divine Heart for all unfaithful souls, that they may there justify themselves to glorify Thee eternally.' "

Pressing Exhortations of Blessed Margaret Mary to aid souls in the great affair of salvation.

To a soul who hesitated to correspond with grace, she writes: " .... Remember that you have a jealous spouse, who will have absolutely all your heart or nothing. If you do not drive creatures out of it, He will quit you, and take away His love from you. There is no medium; He will have all or nothing. His heart is at least worth yours. And have you no confusion in disputing with Him a thing which belongs to Him? Truly I cannot understand how He is not wearied out with your resistance. He must have a great love for you. I tell you this, as to my dear friend in the Sacred Heart of our Lord Jesus Christ, in order that you may take care and

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* *Life by her Contemp.* I., p. 105.

be more faithful in future to the movements of grace." * And to another she says: "Your heart pours itself out too much on creatures, and relies on them more than on the Creator. The love of the creature is a poison in your heart which kills the love of Jesus Christ in it. When you seek the love of creatures and try to insinuate yourself into their good graces, you lose those of the Sacred Heart, which will make you poor as to its treasures in proportion as you enrich yourself with created things. Human satisfactions will dry up to you the source of the graces of the Heart of Jesus, and your own heart will remain like a dry and sterile land.

"Dispute then no longer with grace, I conjure you by all the love of the Sacred Heart of our Lord Jesus Christ; for you must not deceive yourself, this grace which now urges us so strongly will gradually lessen, remit its action, and withdraw from us, leaving us cold and insensible to our own misfortune. It will be useless afterwards to seek and to beg; the Sacred Heart of Jesus will mock us, as we have mocked His grace. May God preserve us from this misfortune!

"I tell you this in order that you may foresee the danger and never fall into it. Often call to mind these words, 'To-day, if you shall hear the voice of the Lord, harden not your heart.' The physician can do us no good if we will not use the remedies which he prescribes, nor abstain from what makes us sick. But as a disease once known is half cured, there needs only a good 'I will,' and all is right. In fine there is question of the salvation of your soul, most dear to Our Lord

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* *Instructions.* II., p. 411.

Jesus Christ, and for which I assure you there is nothing that I would not do or suffer, sin excepted, to render it wholly His who has created it for His glory. But no one can more effectually work at it than you can yourself, by making use of the lights which He gives you to do good and avoid evil.

"Divine love is sufficient to prevent us from doing anything deliberately which would displease the Beloved of our Souls; for I cannot understand how a heart that belongs to God, and that truly wishes to love Him can offend Him with deliberation. I confess that deliberate faults are insupportable to me, because they wound the Heart of God. Beware then of committing them, I conjure you, for they deprive you of many graces, the loss of which retards and greatly weakens your soul in the way of perfection.

"O that we could comprehend the great injury we do to our poor soul by depriving it of so many graces, and exposing it to so evident a peril, by these frequent voluntary falls, which cause it to lose the friendship of God, who cannot listen to her, nor even to those who pray for her, while she herself refuses to hear Him, and to be wholly converted to Him! He closes the entrance of His Sacred Heart against her, because she has driven Him from hers. Let us profit by the time He gives us, and no longer delay. Alas! what a penalty will the servant bring upon himself who knows the will of his Master, and does not accomplish it! I trust, however, that your good heart will not take this ill; but rather that you will reflect on it, in order not to hazard the crown that is destined for you, nor deprive yourself of the many graces for which you will not cease to thank

God at the hour of your death—not always so distant as we think." *

Sublime desire of Blessed Margaret Mary's.

"I know not if I deceive myself, but it seems to me that my greatest pleasure would be to love my most sweet Saviour with a love as ardent as that of the Seraphim; and I should not be miserable, it appears to me, if it were in hell itself that I loved Him. The thought that there will be in the world a place where for all eternity an infinite number of souls, redeemed by the precious Blood of Jesus Christ, will never love that sweetest Redeemer—this thought, I say, sometimes afflicts me to excess.

I would wish, my divine Saviour, if it were Thy will, to suffer all the torments of hell, provided I could love Thee as much as all these unhappy souls, who will suffer always and never love Thee, would have loved Thee in heaven." †

Aspiration of love towards the Heart of Jesus.

O most loving Heart of my one love, Jesus! as I am not able to love, honour and glorify Thee according to the extent of the desire that Thou givest me, I invite heaven and earth to do it for me, and I unite myself to those burning Seraphim to love Thee. O Heart all burning with love, why dost thou not set heaven and earth on fire with Thy most pure flames, to consume all that is in them, that all creatures may breathe only Thy love? Make me either die or suffer, or at least change

* *Instructions and Letters.* II., pp. 397, 409.
† *Letter* cxxviii. to Fr. Rolin.

me entirely into heart to love Thee, consuming me in Thy hottest flames. O fire divine, O flames all pure of the Heart of my only love, Jesus! burn me without pity, consume me without resistance. Alas! why dost thou spare me, since I only deserve the fire, and am fit only for burning? O love of heaven and earth, come wholly into my heart to reduce me to ashes! O devouring fire of the divinity, come, come, to act upon me! Burn me, consume me, in the midst of Thy fiercest heats, which give life to those who die in them. Amen." *

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* *Ancient Mss.* II., p. 497.

26th Day.

THE SOULS IN PURGATORY ARDENTLY DESIRE THE INCREASE OF THE DEVOTION TO THE SACRED HEART, AS A SOVEREIGN REMEDY FOR THEIR SUFFERINGS.

"OH! that you knew," writes Blessed Margaret Mary, "how ardently the poor souls in Purgatory ask for this 'new remedy,' so sovereign a one for their ills—for so they name the devotion to the Sacred Heart, and particularly Masses in Its honour." Speaking of herself she says: "The Sacred Heart of Jesus often gives His poor victim to the souls in Purgatory to help them to satisfy His divine justice; at such times I suffer pains almost like to theirs, and have no repose either day or night.

"One Holy Thursday night, when I had permission to spend it before the Blessed Sacrament, I was during part of the time surrounded as it were by these poor sufferers, with whom I have contracted an intimate friendship; and Our Lord told me that He gave me to them for the whole of this year, to do them all the good that I could.

"Since that time they are often with me, and my name for them is 'my suffering friends.'" "You cannot imagine," she writes again, "the sufferings of that soul!—they are beyond expression. Alas! give me a few drops of water to refresh her, for I burn with her, and I know not how to relieve her." *

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* *Letters* lxxxvii, xx, xxi.

Examples suited to the instruction of persons in the world, and souls consecrated to God.

We read in the life by her Contemporaries:* "Praying for two persons who had been of some consideration in the world, one was shown to her condemned for long years to the pains of Purgatory. All the prayers and suffrages that were offered to God for the repose of his soul had been applied by the divine justice to the souls of some families of his subjects who had been ruined by his want of charity and equity in their regard; and as they had nothing left for prayers to God, after their death, Our Lord supplied as I have said. The other was in Purgatory for as many days as she had lived years on earth; and Our Lord made known to our dear Sister, that among all the good works that this person had done, what had particularly tended to make her judgment light and favourable was certain occasions of humiliation which she had in the world, and which she had endured in a Christian spirit, not only without complaining, but even without speaking of them."

A nun long deceased came to ask the assistance of the prayers of Blessed Margaret Mary, as she herself relates. "'Pray to God for me,' said she, 'offer Him your sufferings united to those of Jesus Christ to relieve mine: look at me laid on this bed of flames in which I suffer intolerable pains.' And showing me that horrible bed, which makes me shudder whenever I think of it, the underpart of which consisted of sharp points all on fire which entered into her flesh, she told me that this

* Vol. I. pp., 274, 277.

was for her sloth and negligence in observing her rules, and for her infidelity to God's graces. 'My heart is torn with red-hot iron combs, which is my most cruel suffering, for the thoughts of murmuring and discontent in which I indulged against my superiors. My tongue is eaten by vermin, in punishment of my words against charity; and for my want of observing silence, see how my mouth is all ulcerated Ah! how I wish that all souls consecrated to God could see me in this horrible torment. If I could make them feel the greatness of my sufferings, and the sufferings which are prepared for those who walk negligently in their vocation, undoubtedly they would live with a very different spirit, in exact observance; they would take great care not to commit the faults for which I am suffering so intensely.' This painful account made me weep bitterly. 'No one,' she continued, 'thinks of alleviating my sufferings. Alas! one day of keeping silence by the whole Community would cure my ulcerated mouth; another passed in the practice of charity, without committing any fault against it, would cure my tongue; a third passed without any murmuring or discontent would heal my lacerated heart.'"

At other times, Blessed Margaret Mary enjoyed the vision of souls delivered by the help of her prayers and penances. The following is what she wrote to Mother de Saumaise:* "My soul is penetrated with so great a joy that I find it hard to contain myself. Allow me, my dear Mother, to communicate it to

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* *Lib.* xxi.

your heart, which forms but one with mine in that of Our Lord. This morning, the Sunday of the Good Shepherd, two of my dear suffering friends on my awaking came to say adieu to me, because it was to-day that the Sovereign Shepherd receives them into His eternal fold, with more than a million others, in whose company they were going with songs of inexpressible joy. One of them said, and repeated incessantly to me: 'Love triumphs, love possesses, love rejoices in God.' The other said: 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord, and the Religious who live and die in the exact observance of their rules.' They want me to tell you from them that death can indeed separate friends, but cannot disunite them. Oh! if you knew how my soul was transported with joy!—for as I was speaking with them, I saw them little by little sinking down in glory like a person who is drowning in a vast ocean. They ask you for a *Te Deum*, a *Laudate*, and three times *Gloria Patri*, in thanksgiving to the most august Trinity. And as I was asking them to remember us, their last words were: 'Ingratitude has never entered Heaven.'"

Blessed Margaret Mary teaches the means of relieving her dear suffering friends in Purgatory.

In various passages of her letters, her zeal manifests itself in these words: "As to my dear suffering friends in Purgatory, it is true that I am more indebted to you for the benefit you have procured for them, than if you had done it for myself. I hope that you will not refuse me the favour of procuring for N. fifteen Masses in honour of the Sacred Heart of Our Lord;

after which it seems to me that he will be a powerful advocate with that Heart for you and all his family." As soon as her desire had been realized, she wrote as follows: "For the fifteen Masses that you have had said, I thank you in the name of this poor soul, which I believe is now very rich in the glory of Heaven, where it will fully repay you for all your charity."

Blessed Margaret Mary, again, teaches us to address ourselves on behalf of those afflicted souls to Our Lord, "whose love keeps Him captive in the most Blessed Sacrament, and by the merit of this captivity," she said, "you must beg liberty for His poor prisoners in Purgatory." *

On other occasions she suggested the making various acts of virtue for their deliverance, for example:

"Purity of intention, acts of which you must offer to God to satisfy His justice, making up by means of the purity of the Sacred Heart the defect of purity of intention on the part of those poor souls, for which they are suffering now.

"Interior silence, which you must unite to that of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, offering to Him all the Holy Sacrifices which are being celebrated in the Church, which you will pray your good angels to hear, and to offer to God to appease His justice.

"Humility, to atone for the principal humiliations which the Heart of Jesus endured in His Passion.

"Charity, which you must unite to the ardent Charity of the Sacred Heart, to pay the debts of those poor souls suffering in that place.

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* *Various Writings.* II., p. 469.

"Love of God, attention to His presence, mortification, gentleness and condescension, for the same intentions.

"But as pride is the largest debt, you must make as many acts of humility as you can. You must unite them to those of this divine Heart to pay for these pooor afflicted souls, who are also much relieved by offering spiritual communions to repair the ill-use they have made of actual ones.

"In the evening you must make a little round of Purgatory, in company with the Sacred Heart, by consecrating to It all that you have said and done, imploring It to apply Its merits to these holy suffering souls. And you will beg of them at the same time to employ their power to obtain for us the grace to live and die in love and fidelity to the Sacred Heart of Our Lord Jesus Christ, by corresponding to His desires about us without resistance. If you can liberate some of these poor prisoners, you will be blessed with as many advocates in heaven, pleading for your salvation." *

Prayer to the Heart of Jesus for all sorts of necessities.

"Make all hearts that are capable of loving Thee, O most sweet Heart, feel Thy sovereign power; mine own and those of my relatives and friends, of all who have asked my prayers or who pray for me, of all to whom I have any obligation. Assist them, I beseech Thee, according to their needs. O Heart full of charity, soften hard hearts and relieve the souls in Purgatory; be the assured refuge of those who are

* *Instructions and Various Writings.* II., p. 440, 469, 441.

in their agony, and the consolation of all the needy and afflicted. Lastly, O Heart of love, be all to me in all things, but principally at the hour of my death be the sure resource of my affrighted soul. Receive it at that hour into Thy merciful bosom. Amen." *

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* *Ancient Mss.* II, p. 499.

27th Day.

To love and suffer is the whole science of a soul that desires to be conformed to Jesus Christ.

"YOU cannot think how much our Sovereign urges me to love Him with a love of conformity to His suffering life! Nothing unites us so much to the Sacred Heart of Our Lord Jesus Christ as the Cross, which is the most precious pledge of His love. The greatest good we ought to desire is to be conformed to Jesus Christ suffering: we ought not to desire to live except to have the happiness of suffering for love, though never according to our own choice. Let us endeavour to think of nothing but learning to carry our crosses properly, in loving silence; for the Cross is a precious treasure, which we ought to keep secret that it may not be taken away from us. I see nothing that so much relieves the weary length of life as always to suffer and to love. Let us then suffer lovingly without complaining, and let us consider the moments lost that are passed without suffering.

"Ah! my God, if we but knew what we lost in not profiting by opportunities of suffering, we should be much more attentive than we are, not to lose one moment of suffering. We must not deceive ourselves; if we do not make better profit of those occasions of sufferings, humiliations and contradictions, we lose

the good graces of the Sacred Heart of Our Lord Jesus Christ, which desires, that we rank as our best friends and benefactors all those who make us suffer, or supply us with the occasions of suffering. Ah! how good is the Cross at all times and in all places. Let us then embrace it lovingly, without caring of what wood it is made, nor by what instrument it is constructed. It should be enough for us that it is a Cross, and that it is presented to us by the Sacred Heart of Our Lord. Let us then only study to love and to suffer, for the love of Him who has so ardently loved the Cross for our sake, that He has been pleased to die in its arms; and when we have perfectly acquired this science, we shall know and do all that God requires of us. It is not that we are to ask for suffering, for the most perfect way is to ask for nothing and refuse nothing, but we are to abandon ourselves to pure love, and let ourselves be crucified and consumed according to its desire. You ask me which of the mysteries of His Sacred Passion I like the best; I tell you in simplicity that it is the Crucifixion, and to keep myself with the most Blessed Virgin at the foot of the Cross, or under the feet of the Cross, there to attach and unite myself to all that He has done for us."

To her Brother, the Curé of Bois-Sainte-Marie, she wrote: "Assist me by your holy Sacrifices, in order that at least I may learn to suffer rightly, since it appears to me that this, and to love Him in suffering, are all God requires of me, and that it is for this alone He has placed me in life; and indeed I am not a moment without suffering, though I am not on that

account weary of it, and by His Mercy He makes me ever hunger more and more for His Cross." *

The Cross is a magnificent present from the Three Divine Persons.

"My divine Spouse still continuing to impart to me His graces, gave me the following one: The three Adorable Persons of the most Holy Trinity presented themselves to me, and imparted great consolations to my soul. I cannot explain what took place, except that the Eternal Father presenting me a large Cross, all bristling with thorns and accompanied by all the instruments of the Passion, said to me: 'Take this, my daughter, I make thee the same present as to my well-beloved Son.' 'And I,' said Jesus Christ, 'will fasten thee to it as I was fastened, and will keep thee faithful company upon it.' The adorable Person of the Holy Ghost told me that being all love, He would consume me on it, while He purified me. They appeared to me under the form of three young men clothed in white, all resplendent with light, all of the same height and beauty: my soul was filled with an inconceivable joy and peace: the impression which the vision of these divine Persons made on me will never be effaced from my spirit." †

Encouragement given by Blessed Margaret Mary to souls under the weight of the cross.

"Offering you to our Lord," she writes to a soul who was much tried, "this thought came into my mind: let her be faithful in her path, suffering everything she meets

* *Letters* x., xcii., lxxxvi., xcii,, c. † *Life by her Contemp.* I., p. 80.

without complaint, since she cannot be in the number of the perfect friends of My Heart until she has been purified and tried in the crucible of suffering. Suffer then, and be satisfied with the divine good pleasure, to which you should always be immolated and sacrificed, with a firm hope and confidence that the Sacred Heart will not abandon you, since, It is nearer to you when you suffer than when you rejoice."

To others again she wrote : " Life is only given us in order to suffer in, and eternity to rejoice in. The Cross is the portion of the elect in this life. Although God wills to save us He wills also that we contribute our share, and He will do nothing without us ; hence we must resolve to suffer. This is the time for a plentiful seed-time for eternity, in which the harvest will be abundant. Do not lose courage ; your labours endured with patience are worth a thousand times more than any other austerity. *

" You are distressed by your interior troubles, but for my part I assure you that it is precisely from them that you ought to draw your greatest consolation, if you bear them with peace, submission and abandonment to the Sacred Heart of our Lord, who gives them to us only through an excess of His love for us, as He desires you should know in order, that you may be grateful for it.

" In the first place He would purify you by these trials from all the affection you have had for creatures contrary to the purity of His divine love. Secondly, He wishes to make you merit the crown which He has

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* *Instructions.* II., p. 377 ; *Letters* xcvi., cxv.

destined for you, in giving you a small share of the bitterness He suffered during the whole time of His mortal life; and you are most blessed, whatever may be your pains, in having this conformity with Him. Besides, interior sweetnesses only as it were amuse our minds and produce in us a vain complacency, and never pure and solid love. See whether you are not much indebted to Him for pursuing this conduct with you.

"Interior pains received with love are like a purifying fire, which goes on insensibly consuming in the soul everthing that displeases the divine Spouse, and therefore I feel assured that those who make the trial will acknowledge that they advance greatly on their road without noticing it; so that, if we had our choice, a faithful soul would not hesitate, but would instantly embrace this beloved Cross, even if it had no other advantage than that of rendering us like our crucified Lord. We may be assured that one suffers more amid sweetness, however little may be the love we bear Him, when we see ourselves near Him who for love of us was loaded with insults and suffering, than if we saw ourselves in the same state as He is; or if this be not the case let us own that we do not love Him, and that it is rather ourselves that we love; for pure love cannot endure anything unlike in the lovers, and gives no repose until it has rendered the loving one conformed to her beloved—for otherwise she could never attain to union, which is made only by conformity." *

"The loving Heart of Jesus mortifies and vivifies when and as It pleases, and we have no right to ask

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* *Life by her Contemp.* I., p. 112.

why. It must suffice us that It does the thing because such is Its good-pleasure, to which we must submit with love, kissing the hand which strikes us, and which separates us from those who are dearest to us in order to make us more perfectly and solely Its own." * "God strips you of all human support and consolation only because He Himself wishes to be the sole and true friend of your heart, which He desires to possses alone, without mixture or obstacle. In order to be all to you in all things, He will have you have no other support than Himself. His holy name be blessed: His holy will be done! Cease all these returns on self: to suffer or to rejoice must be matter of indifference to us, provided the Sacred Heart accomplish Its good pleasure in us. To love, suffer and be silent is the secret of the lovers of Jesus Christ." †

Prayer to Our Lord as to an all-powerful Physician.

"O Jesus, my Love, in memory of the sacrifice which Thou didst make of Thyself on the cross, and which Thou makest now in the most Blessed Sacrament, I beseech Thee to accept that which I make Thee of all my being, immolated and sacrificed to Thine adorable designs and will. Receive me in my spirit of penance and of sacrifice. O heavenly Physician of my soul, and sovereign remedy of my ills, I come to present myself to thee as a sick person hopeless of cure from any one save Thine adorable Heart, which alone knows my diseases and can cure me of them. This is what I hope for from Thy goodness, since Thou hast made Thyself my healing-

* *Let.* cxiii., to Sr. Dubuysson.
† *Instructions.* p. 337; *Let.* lxxxvi.

plaster of love in this sweet Sacrament. My baseness and my coldness in Thy love have caused all my infirmities, but Thou canst, if Thou wilt, heal me of them ; for I am ready to suffer anything for this. Pierce, burn, cut off ; if I but love Thee and am saved I submit to all. And on my own part, I am ready to employ lance and fire, by an entire mortification and crucifixion of myself, in order to heal the wounds which pride and self-love have inflicted on my soul. Apply Thyself then to my poor pining heart, as an *epithem* of love. O my charitable Physician, have pity on my infirmities, and deliver me from them for the glory of Thy name. Amen." *

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* *Ancient Mss.* II., p. 494.

28th Day.

The love which the Sacred Heart of Jesus inspires for the Cross.

"As all things find repose only in their centre, my heart, lost in its centre which is the most humble Heart of Jesus, has an ardent thirst for humiliations, contempt, and forgetfulness on the part of all creatures, and I am never more contented than when I am conformed to my crucified Spouse. I know not how a spouse of Jesus crucified can dislike the Cross and fly from it, since at the same time she shows a disesteem for Him who carried it for love of us, and made it the object of His delights." *

"The grace which I most esteem after Himself is the gift of His precious Cross. If the value of it were rightly known it would not be so much avoided and rejected by everyone, but on the contrary would be so much cherished and loved that no pleasure would be found save in the Cross, and there would be no other desire but to die in its arms, despised and abandoned by all the world. But for this it is necessary that pure love be the sacrificer and consumer of our heart, as it was of our good Master's.

"Can a heart which truly loves complain on the Cross, or rather in the Heart, of Jesus Christ, where all is changed into love? The Cross is the throne of the

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* *Life by her Contemp.* I., pp. 60, 43.

lovers of Jesus Christ. It is true that I am not on it as such, since I am there for my sins, but it matters not; provided that we suffer with Jesus Christ, for the love of Him and according to His designs, it is enough. I desire to learn in the Sacred Heart of Jesus to suffer everything without complaining of anything that is done me, since nothing is due to dust except to be trodden under foot. I am in every sense poor, thank God, and desire to be rich only in the pure love of sufferings, contempt and humiliations. In a word, Jesus, His love and His Cross form the happiness of life." *

"The Cross, contempt, pains and humiliations are the true treasures of the lovers of Jesus Christ. Let us then submit with joy to the orders of our Sovereign, and confess that notwithstanding all that seems to us severe and afflicting, He is just and good in all that He does, and merits at all times praise, love and glory. He who says pure love says pure suffering. We ought to love our pains, and unite ourselves to the designs of God about us. In truth I do not know what to say to those whom I love, if I do not speak to them of the Cross of Jesus Christ, and when they ask me of the graces which our Lord gives me, I can speak only of the happiness there is in suffering with Jesus Christ; for I see nothing more precious in this life for those who love Him than to suffer for His love. The Cross is an inestimable treasure; the Cross is my glory. Love leads me thither, love possesses me, love suffices me." †

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* *Letters* xxv., xcix., xlviii.
† *Life by her Contemp.* I. p. 115.

Blessed Margaret Mary remembers that she tried in her childhood to separate sanctity from sacrifice.

"My divine Master made me (even as a child) see the beauty of the virtues, above all of the three vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, telling me that in practising them we become saints, and He told me this because when I prayed I asked Him to make me a saint. And as I read scarcely any other books than the *Lives of the Saints*, I said to myself on opening them: 'I must choose one that is very easy to imitate, so that I may do as she did and become a saint like her.'* But, O my God! I thought not then of what Thou hast made me know and experience since, that Thy Sacred Heart having brought me forth on Calvary with such pain, the life that Thou there gavest me could not be sustained save by the nourishment of the Cross, which should be my delicious food." †

Blessed Margaret Mary, inebriated with the love of the Cross, nevertheless felt its thorns.

She thus relates a vision with which our Lord honoured her a short time after her profession, when she once exclaimed: "How! my God, wilt Thou always leave me without suffering?" "First," she says, "a large cross was shown to me, the end of which I could not see. It was all covered with flowers, but my Sovereign at the same time made me hear these words: 'Behold the bed of my chaste spouses, on which I will make thee enjoy the supreme pleasures of My love. Gradually these flowers will fall off, and there will remain only the thorns which on account of thy weakness they conceal, but they will make thee feel their

* *Life by herself.* II., p. 301. † *Life by her Contemp.* I., p. 8.

pricks so sharply that thou wilt require all the force of My love to enable thee to bear the pain.' These words greatly rejoiced me, for I had feared that I should never find sufficient sufferings, humiliations or contempt to satisfy the ardent thirst which I had for them, and that I should never find a greater suffering than that which I felt from not having enough to suffer; for His love left me no repose either day or night. But these sweetnesses afflicted me; I wanted the Cross all bare. 'Without the Cross,' she says again, 'I could not live, nor taste any pleasure even celestial or divine, because all my delight was to see myself conformed to my suffering Jesus.'"

She ceased not to experience the effects of the promise of Our Lord, and speaks thus about it: "I found myself sometimes oppressed with such pains that I felt when I commenced an exercise as if I could not get to the end of it; and then I began the next with the same feelings, saying: 'O my God, give me the grace to be able to last to the end'—and I gave thanks to my Sovereign for that he measured thus my moments by the clock of his sufferings, and made all their hours strike by the wheels of his pains." *

"The Spirit by which I believe myself to be led would always wish to see me buried under all kinds of humiliations, sufferings and contradictions . . . Nature finds no satisfaction in all this, but this Spirit which governs mine cannot suffer me to have any other pleasure than that of having none.† Our Lord is pleased to keep me in a state of continual suffering, in which I no longer know myself, and the exhaustion of my

* *Life by herself.* II., p. 321, 364, 367. † *Let.* xxiv., to Mother Greyfié.

strength causes me extreme difficulty in dragging along this miserable flesh of sin. I seem to be enclosed as it were in a dark prison, surrounded by crosses which I embrace in turn one after the other. You cannot think how bad a use I make of this great good, especially of these dear and precious humiliations and abjections, with oppressions of heart, abandonments and anguish of almost every kind. My soul seems sometimes to be reduced as it were to agony, and to the last extremity, despite the pleasure which it takes to swim in this ocean of bitterness, which I esteem one of the chiefest favours of my divine Spouse. I feel myself continually urged to suffer, yet with frightful movements of repugnance in the interior part, which makes my crosses so heavy and painful, that I should give in a thousand times, if the adorable Heart of my Jesus did not strengthen and assist me in all my needs. And ever amid my continual sufferings my heart thirsts to suffer." *

Union with Jesus immolated.

"O my sweet Jesus, only love of my heart, sweet torture of my soul, and beloved martyrdom of my flesh and my body, the only grace that I ask of Thee in order to honour Thy state of victim in the Blessed Sacrament, is that I may live and die the victim of Thy Sacred Heart, by a bitter disgust for all that is not Thyself; a victim of Thy holy soul, by all the anguish of which mine is capable; a victim of thy holy body, by the privation of all that can please mine, and by hatred for a criminal and accursed flesh." †

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* *Letters* xii., xxxix. † *Ancient Mss.* II., p. 497.

29th Day.

PURE JOYS OF SOULS POSSESSED WITH THE LOVE OF THE SACRED HEART OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

"I CANNOT find my consolation, pleasure or repose except amid crosses, humiliations and sufferings, with which my sweet Saviour has never ceased to honour his unworthy slave. I only wish to live in order to have the happiness of suffering. The only thing which is capable of recreating my heart and my spirit is to talk of this with those whom I love; for all other conversation is a torture to me, and all other graces are not to be compared with that of carrying the cross with Jesus Christ for love of Him. But do not think that although I thus talk of suffering I suffer much. Alas! no; for I have as yet suffered nothing, and consequently done nothing, for my God.

"To wish to love God without suffering is simply an illusion, and yet I cannot understand why we should be said to suffer when we truly love the Sacred Heart of our Lord Jesus Christ, since it changes all the bitterest bitternesses into sweetness, and makes us taste delights in the midst of the greatest pains and humiliations. But if the sole desire of ardently loving this divine Heart can produce this effect, what delights will It produce in hearts that truly love It, and whose greatest suffering is the not suffering enough, or rather not loving enough? .... In truth I think that all is changed into love for a soul which is once inflamed

with this sacred fire, and which has no longer any exercise or employment save to love in suffering. Let us then love our divine Master, but let us love Him on the cross, since His delight is to find in a heart love, suffering and silence." *

"No, nothing is capable of pleasing me in this world but the cross of my divine Master; and a Cross just like His own, heavy, ignominious, without sweetness, without consolation, without relief. Let others be happy enough to ascend Thabor with my divine Saviour; as for me I shall be satisfied with knowing no other road than that of Calvary, and I find no attraction but in the Cross. My portion shall therefore be on Calvary till my last sigh, amidst the scourges, the nails, the thorns and the Cross, without consolation or pleasure but that of having none. What a happiness always to suffer in silence, and at last to die in miseries of body and soul, in forgetfulness and contempt!—for the one would not please me without the other.

"Ah! what should I do without the Cross in this valley of tears, in which I lead so criminal a life that I regard myself simply as a sink of miseries? I fear indeed that I make myself unworthy of the infinite blessing of carrying the cross, and of resembling my suffering Jesus. I beseech you, if you have any charity for me, beg this loving Saviour not to turn away from me on account of the ill-use which I have made up to now of this precious treasure of the cross, by depriving me of the happiness of suffering; for this is the only alleviation which I have of the length of my exile. I see

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* *Let.* cxi.. to Sr. Joly.

indeed that I take too much satisfaction in speaking of sufferings, and yet I cannot help it, for the ardent thirst which I feel for them is a torture that I cannot describe. At the same time I know well that I can neither suffer nor love, and hence I see that all I say about it is but an effect of my self-love and of a secret pride which dwells in me. Ah! how I fear that all these desires of suffering are only artifices of the evil one, to amuse me by vain and sterile feelings." *

"I own that I am so glad to speak of the happiness of suffering that methinks I could write whole volumes about it without ever satisfying my desire. If people did but know the desire which I have to suffer and be despised, I have no doubt that charity would lead everybody to give me this satisfaction. And truly they can do me no injustice in making me suffer, as they can never do so as much as I deserve. The more I suffer the more I feel my ardent thirst for suffering. I even fear that I take too great satisfaction in suffering. But the part that I have resolved to choose in all this is to entirely abandon and submit myself to the infinite goodness of my sovereign Master, moderating even this my ardent desire of suffering, and leaving to Him the care of doing all.

"When I see my sufferings increase I seem to feel within me something of the joy which misers and ambitious men feel when they see their treasures growing. I should like to have all the instruments of torture employed to martyr me, and to make me suffer for Jesus Christ. It seems to me that I would wish to

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* *Let.* cxxix., to Fr. Rolin.

have a thousand bodies to suffer with, and thousands of hearts to love and adore Him. What should I do if the Cross departed from me, since it is what gives me hope in the mercy of my Saviour. It is my treasure in the adorable Heart of Jesus; it there forms all my pleasure, all my joy and all my desire. Were I a moment without suffering I should think that He had abandoned me." *

"Ah! do you know that without the Cross and the Blessed Sacrament I could not live or support the length of my exile in this valley of tears, where I desire no lessening of my pains? The more my body is borne down by crosses the more of true joy and liberty does my spirit feel to occupy and unite myself with my Jesus suffering, nor more do I desire than to make myself a perfect copy of this crucified Saviour." †

Heroic courage of Blessed Margaret Mary under sufferings.

In order to trace His divine resemblance more and more clearly in His faithful Spouse, the divine Master deigned to give her a share of His crown of thorns. "Once when I was going to Holy Communion," she says, "the sacred Host appeared to me resplendent like a sun, so that I could not bear its splendour. Our Lord was in the midst holding a crown of thorns, which a little after I had received Him He placed on my head, saying: Receive, my daughter, this crown, as a sign of the one which will soon be given thee, like unto Mine. I did not then know what this meant; but I soon knew it by the effects which followed; namely, two terrible blows which I received on the

* *Letters* cxxx., xxxviii., viii. † *Life by herself.* II., p. 350.

head, of such a kind that I seemed afterwards to have all round my head a pain as of very sharp thorns, the prickings of which will cease only with my life, and for which I give infinite thanks to my God, who does such great graces to His unworthy victim .... I confess that I think myself more indebted to my Sovereign for this precious crown than if he had made me a present of all the diadems of the greatest monarchs of the earth; and all the more because no one can take it from me, and because it places me often in the happy necessity of keeping awake and entertaining myself with that sole object of my love. And when I could not lay my head on my pillow, like my divine Master who could not rest His adorable head when He was on the bed of the cross, it made me feel indescribable joy and consolation, seeing myself in some measure conformed to Him." *

Blessed Margaret Mary begs to be helped to thank God for the blessing of suffering.

"Bless and thank for me our sovereign Master, for that He honours me so lovingly and so liberally with His precious cross, leaving me not a moment without suffering. I have the happiness to have no other caresses or consolations from creatures than crosses and humiliations, in which I was never richer. I say this little word to you in passing, to excite you to render thanks for me to the Sacred Heart, and to beseech It to give me the grace to profit by so precious a treasure. Were it in my power to alter things, I would simply remove what might offend God, and for all the rest I would wish ever what He permits for my humiliation,

* *Life by herself.* II., p. 365.

and I make all my joy of this in the adorable Heart of my Jesus.

"Blessed be Our Lord who graciously favours me with His cross, which is my glory! What shall I render to the Lord for the great graces which He has done me? O my God, how great are thy kindnesses to me, to let me eat at the table of the Saints, and of the same food with which Thou hast fed them! Thou givest me to eat abundantly of the delicious meats of Thy favourite and faithful friends, me who am but a worthless and wretched sinner." *

Prayer to the wounded Heart of Jesus Christ.

O Heart of Jesus, filled with love! O Heart that woundest hearts harder than stone, warmest souls colder than ice, and softenest feelings more inpenetrable than the diamond! Wound then, O my sweetest Saviour, my heart with Thy sacred wounds, and inebriate my soul with Thy blood, that on whatever side I turn I may be able to perceive nothing but my divine Crucified, and that all I see may appear to me to be coloured with Thy blood. O my good Jesus, let my heart have no repose till it find Thee, who art its centre, its love and felicity. O Heart divine, who hast shown us on the cross the excess of Thy love and mercy by letting Thyself be opened to give entrance to ours, receive them therefore now, drawing them by the bands of Thy charity, to consume them by the vehemence of Thy love." †

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* *Life by herself.* II., p. 150.
† *Little Book of Prayers.* II., p. 483.

30th Day.

Triumph of the Sacred Heart of Our Lord Jesus Christ by the annihilation of Blessed Margaret Mary.

OUR Lord with a voice full of authority said once to His humble servant: "I will make thee so poor, so vile, so abject in thine own eyes, and will so utterly annihilate thee in the thought of my heart, that I may be able to build Myself upon this nothing."

Under the impression of these words, her heart gave utterance to such sublime sentiments as these: "All to the greater glory of the Sacred Heart of our Lord Jesus Christ! O my sovereign good, may I write nothing except to Thy glory and my own confusion! I must efface and annihilate myself, to live poor, unknown, hidden in the Sacred Heart of my divine Master, forgotten and despised by creatures . . . . for this Sacred Heart would establish Its kingdom upon the destruction and annihilation of myself. It would be to me a sweet joy to annihilate myself that It might reign. The adorable Heart of my Saviour makes use of a subject more apt to destroy this great good than to make it succeed, but it is in order that all the glory may be given to the sovereign Master, and not to the instrument which He uses, which is like to that clay which Our Lord used for the eyes of that man born blind.

"I rejoice in the sweet thought that this dear Saviour, not having been able to find a subject more poor, more

vile, more incapable, more worthless than me for this work which is to procure Him so much glory, chose me, with the intention of supplying all the necessary aids. In truth I am naught but an obstacle to all good, and a mass of miseries in body and soul. The only support of my weakness is this, that Our Lord takes pleasure in glorifying His infinite mercy in subjects the most pitiable. My sins make me unworthy to render any service to this divine Heart, the author of all sanctity. Alas! what reason have I to fear that by my great infidelity and ingratitude I have made myself an obstacle to the establishment of Its kingdom! This makes me desire rather to be exterminated from the earth a thousand times with no regard had to my fate, than to be the smallest obstacle to the accomplishment of Its designs." *

Opinion which Blessed Margaret Mary had of herself.

"My adorable Master, out of the excess of his merciful kindness, keeps me so wholly reduced to nothing in my spirit by the sight of a nature entirely ruined and devoid of all spiritual good, that I can never be sufficiently astonished to have any credence whatever given to what so wicked a creature may say; yea, that people even so much as remember her. I am only a hypocrite, who deceive creatures by a false appearance of devotion. I have never been more ungrateful, unfaithful, wicked, than I am now, being nothing but a combination of pride and malice, which continually opposes His goodness by my resistance to His divine will and my coldness in His love, which coldness makes me so mean

* *Letters* lxvi., lxxviii., civ., cvi.

in His service, that I am horrified with myself when I consider the life I lead, which is all sensual and all filled with sins.

"I see in myself a great need of humiliation of self; but I know not how to get it, for I can see nothing below me, who am but criminal nothingness. Beg my perfect conversion from the Sacred Heart of our dear Saviour. Pray that His mercy may not tire of awaiting my repentance, but above all that He may not deprive me of loving Him for an eternity because I have not loved Him in time. That is the rigorous chastisement which I dread, all the rest makes no impression on my spirit. I assure you that I see myself so void of the purity of intention which God requires of me, that it seems that all my actions condemn me. If you only knew how great my malice is, and how offensive it makes my life to His goodness, you would ask His pardon for it. Do so, I beseech you. I think that no one has more reason to fear for His salvation than I, so wicked and so unfaithful to my God do I see myself to be: I see nothing in me which is not worthy of an eternal chastisement. Praise Our Lord for that I am not already buried in the depths of hell, on account of the multitude of my sins.

"My life up to now has been so offensive to God that I count among His chiefest mercies to my soul that one which He grants me in making me suffer here below... by this means I hope to pay something of that heavy debt which I have incurred by my sins. I confess that our good God would treat me justly if He abandoned me to all the rigours of His divine justice; but He wills to leave me yet some time, to exercise the charity of the

sisters, and to give me the opportunity of bewailing my sins, and of commencing anew to suffer—if the happiness of sharing Our Saviour's cross can be called suffering. Oh! how painful it is to live without loving the sovereign good and without suffering for this love! Love demands works, and I have only words for what is good, my works are for what is evil.

"You cannot think how far I am from what a true daughter of Sainte-Marie should be, who ought to make it her only aim to make herself an exact likeness of her crucified Spouse. It even seems to me that it is by my infidelities that I draw down all the calamities which I hear of, and this is to me a perpetual martyrdom. I cannot understand how any one bears with me, so destitute of all worth do I find myself. I would wish that all creatures were fired with a holy zeal to treat me as guilty of high-treason against God. The sorrow which I feel for the many horrible crimes which I have committed against God makes me offer myself perpetually to His divine goodness, to suffer all the penalties which I have deserved. I accept moreover the penalties due to those sins into which I should have fallen without the help of grace. But what makes me suffer still more is my inability to avenge upon myself the injuries which are done to my Saviour in the most holy Sacrament of the Altar." *

Contempt of Blessed Margaret Mary for the esteem of creatures, and her desires of being eternally forgotten.

"I had so great a fear that the gifts of God might bring me the esteem of creatures, who often praise what

* *Letters* xx., xxiv., lxxx., lxxxvi.

deserves blame, that I preferred to be without it, and I feared less the rage of hell than I did praises, which instil a secret poison into the soul and impercepitibly takes away its life, unless God of His mercy lay upon it the divine healing-plaster of humiliation. Esteem, praise and applause made me suffer more than all humiliations, contempt and abjections can make the vainest and most ambitious persons suffer; and this made me say sometimes: 'O my God, arm rather all the rage of hell against me than the tongues of creatures for me, with their vain praises, flattery, and applause; rather let all humiliations, griefs, contraditions and confusion overwhelm me.'" *

I would wish with all my heart that my misery and my ingratitude to God should be known by every one, in order that this wretch may no longer be remembered save to be treated with the contempt and humiliations which are due to her, and in which I desire to be buried in life and in death, begging God with all my heart that no one may ever conceive a good thought of me. I own to you in good faith that the desire of being forgotten and depised by creatures by which I feel myself urged, makes me suffer a continual martyrdom in the employments of holy Religion, as does writing, and going to the parlour, which seems to me the extremity of torment. † Methinks I shall never be at peace till I see myself in the lowest depths of humiliation and suffering, unknown to all the world and buried in an eternal oblivion; or if I am remembered let it be only to despise me more, and to give me a further opportunity of suffering something for my God.

* *Life by herself.* II., p. 353. † *Un enfer.*

"Ah! how grateful should I be to you, my good mother," she wrote in particular to Mother de Saumaise,* "if you would do me the kindness of burning all the letters of mine which you may have, that nothing of them may be seen or known in the place where they came from: for I have as passionate a desire to be buried in contempt and oblivion after my death as during my life."

And later she wrote: "I shall now die content, since the Sacred Heart of my Saviour begins to be known and I to be unknown: that now, by His mercy, my reputation and esteem of me are almost entirely blotted out and annihilated in the minds of creatures, a thing that consoles me more than I can say. I remember what you have promised me on this subject, which is to hinder as much as you can all mention of me after my death, except to ask prayers for the one who the most needs them and is the most wicked of all the religious that have ever been in the Institute, and in the holy community in which I have the honour to be, and where a continual forbearance and charity are exercised in every way towards me. I shall never lose the remembrance of it before the Sacred Heart of my Jesus." †

Aspirations towards the Heart of Jesus.

"O good Jesus, who hast willed to suffer an infinity of insults and humiliations for love of me, impress the love and esteem of them deeply in my heart, and make me desire the practice of them. O most merciful Heart, which takest such pleasure in doing us good, grant me the good of paying my debt to the divine justice. I am

* *Let.* ix. † *Let.* xliv., to Mother Greyfié.

insolvent, pay for me. Repair the evils that I have done, by the good works which Thou hast done. And that I may owe all to Thee, receive me, O Heart of charity, at the dreadful hour of my death. Ah! what glory wouldst Thou get from the loss of a worthless atom?—and it will be greatly for thy glory to save a sinner so wretched. Save me then, pure Love, for I will to love Thee eternally, cost what it may. Yes, I will to love Thee, whatever it may cost me, I will to love Thee with all my heart." *

* *Little Book of Prayers.* II., pp. 481, 484, 487.

Closing of the Month of the Sacred Heart.

THE HUMBLE APOSTLE OF THE HEART OF JESUS GOES TO BE ABSORBED THEREIN FOR ALL ETERNITY.

GOD, who is the master of hearts, had so entirely changed those of the persons who had been the most opposed to the establishment of the devotion to the Sacred Heart, that Blessed Margaret Mary had, at the time of her death in 1690, the consolation of seeing it approved, preached and established almost everywhere.

During the last four months of her life she was often heard to foretell her approaching end. "I shall certainly die this year," she said, "because I suffer no longer, and because I must not hinder the great fruits which my divine Saviour intends to draw from a book on devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus."* To prepare for her last passage, she undertook a retreat of forty days, during which she thus expressed her sentiments: "Since St. Magdalen's day I have felt myself extremely urged to reform my life, in order to prepare myself to appear before the sanctity of God, whose justice is so greatly to be feared and whose judgments are unsearchable. I must therefore always keep my accounts ready, so as not to be taken by surprise; for it is a horrible thing to fall at the hour of death into

* By Fr. Croiset, S.J. It was published in 1691, and ends with a short life of Blessed Margaret Mary.

the hands of a living God, when by sin one has withdrawn oneself during life from the arms of a dying God. I have therefore proposed to myself, in order to put into effect this wholesome inspiration, to make an interior retreat in the Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ. . . .

"On the first day of my retreat, my occupation was to think whence might come this great desire of dying, since it is not ordinary with criminals, such as I am before God, to be very glad to meet their judge, and a judge the sanctity of whose justice penetrates to the very marrow of the bones, from whom nothing can be hidden, and who will leave nothing unpunished. How then, my soul, canst thou feel this great joy at the approach of death? Thou thinkest but of finishing thine exile, and Thou art transported with joy in representing to thyself that thou wilt soon be released from thy prison. But alas! take care that from a temporal joy, springing perhaps only from blindness and ignorance, thou plunge not into an eternal sadness, and from this mortal and perishable prison thou fall not into those eternal dungeons whence there is no hope of ever escaping.

"Let us leave then, my soul, this joy and this desire of dying for those holy and fervent souls for which such great rewards are prepared. As for us, the works of a criminal life leave us nothing to expect save eternal chastisements, unless God were more good than just in our regard. Thinking then what thy fate may be, canst thou endure, throughout eternity, the absence of Him the enjoyment of whom is the object of thy most ardent desires, and the privation of whom makes thee feel such cruel pains.

Oh! how hard is this account for me to give, since I have wasted my time, and know not how I can make it up! In the difficulty in which I found myself to put this reckoning straight, and keep it always ready to render, I knew not whom to have recourse to except my adorable Master, who out of His great kindness has deigned to undertake it Himself. Wherefore I handed to Him all the articles on which I am to be judged and sentenced, namely our rules, constitutions and directory, on which I shall be justified or condemned. After having remitted to Him all my interests, I felt an admirable peace, under His feet, where He kept me a long time as it were annihilated in the abyss of my nothingness, awaiting His judgment on this execrable criminal.

"On the second day, at my prayers, there was presented to me as it were a picture of all that I had been and then was—but, my God, what could there be more monstrous or more horrible to behold! I saw there no good, but so much evil that it was a torture to me to think of it. . . . O my Saviour, what am I, to be so long expected unto penance, I who have a thousand times exposed myself to be plunged into hell from the excess of my malice—and as often Thou hast saved me from it of Thine infinite mercy? Continue then, my beloved Saviour, to exercise Thy mercy on a subject which so greatly needs it . . . deprive me not, O my God, of loving Thee eternally for not having sufficiently loved Thee in time. As to the rest, do with me as Thou wilt; I owe Thee all that I have, all that I am; nor could all the good which I might do make reparation for the least of my faults without Thyself. I am unable to pay; Thou seest it clearly, my divine Master; put me

in prison, I consent, if it be but that of Thy Sacred Heart: and when I am therein keep me there close captive and bound by the chains of Thy love, until I have paid Thee all that I owe Thee, and as this I can never do, so am I willing never to be let out." *

In a letter of the same period she says: "I find myself in a surprising cessation of all desires. I fear lest this apparent peace be an effect of that tranquillity in which God sometimes leaves unfaithful souls, and I fear that by my infidelity to His graces I may have brought myself into this state which is perhaps a mark of reprobation; for I own to you that I can no longer will or desire anything in this world, although I see that every sort of virtue is wanting to me. . . . I only feel a perfect acquiescence in the good pleasure of God, and an indescribable pleasure in suffering." †

She had arrived at this state of perfection when it pleased Our Lord to take her to Himself. "During her last illness, a Sister having perceived that she was in extraordinary suffering offered to procure for her some relief; but, thanking her, she said that each remaining moment of life was too precious not to be taken advantage of; that she certainly suffered much, but yet not enough to satisfy her desire, so great a charm did she find in suffering; and that it was so great a satisfaction to her to live and die on the cross, that ardent as was her desire to enjoy her God, she would have a still greater to remain in her present state till the day of judgment, if such were the good pleasure of God, so great a delight did she find in it."

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* *Life by her Contemp.* I., p. 294, 296.
† *Let.* cxxxiii, to Fr. Rolin,

God willed, however, to purify this saintly soul by inspiring her with so great a fear of His justice that she suddenly fell into a state of trembling alarm at the sight of the appalling judgments of God. "She was seen to tremble, to humble and abase herself before her crucifix. She was heard to repeat with profound sighs—'Mercy, my God, mercy!' But after some time her fears were dispelled; her spirit entered into a great calm and a strong assurance of her salvation. Joy and tranquillity reappeared in her face, and she cried out: 'The mercies of the Lord I will sing for ever;' and on other occasions—'What besides Thee alone, O my God, have I in heaven, or desire I upon earth?' And again: 'Ah! I burn, I burn! What a consolation, if it were but with divine love! But I have never known what it is to love my God perfectly.' And addressing those who were holding her up, she said: 'Ask Him to pardon me for it, and do you love Him properly with all your heart to make up for the moments in which I have not done so. What a happiness to love God! Ah! what a happiness! Love then this love, yea love it perfectly.'

"She said this with such transports that it was clear that her heart was truly penetrated with it. Thereupon she enlarged on the excess of the love of a God for His creatures, and of the slightness of the return which they make Him. 'Ah, Lord,' she said again, 'and when will you let me quit this place of exile?' repeating many times—'*Lætatus sum in his &c.*, I rejoice in the things which were said to me, &c. Yes, I hope that by the mercy of the Sacred Heart we shall go into the house of the Lord.'

"She begged that they would say by her side the Litany of this adorable Heart, and also that of the Blessed Virgin to make her favourable to her at the last moment. An hour before expiring she again thanked the Mother Superior for all the little alleviations which she sedulously tried to procure her, saying that there was no longer need of them, that she had nothing more to do in this world but bury herself in the Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ, to breathe therein her latest sigh.

"After this, she remained some time in great calm; and then, uttering the holy Name of Jesus, she sweetly gave up her spirit, by an excess of that ardent love for Jesus Christ which, from her cradle, had struck such profound roots in her soul." *

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* *Life by her Contemp.* I., p. 302.

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Errata.

p. xxix, note, line 1.	*For*	distinguished	*read*	distinguishing.
,, ,, ,, 14.	,,	de Greyfié	,,	Greyfié.
p. 7, line 9.	,,	we	,,	me.
p. 49, note.	,,	Robin	,,	Rolin.
p. 74, line 6.	,,	protesting	,,	prostrating.
p. 79, line 6.	,,	pardon let us	,,	pardon, let us.
,, line 10.	,,	pray	,,	pay.
p. 83, line 6.	,,	then	,,	them.
p. 90, line 19.	,,	appeard	,,	appeared.
p. 96, note.	,,	Sourdeilles	,,	Soudeilles.
p. 101, line 21.	,,	enlighen	,,	enlighten.
p. 113, line 20.	,,	fom	,,	from.
p. 132, line 22.	,,	or omit	,,	nor omit.
p. 134, line 25.	,,	condence	,,	confidence.
p. 145, last line.	*Delete*	my-		
p. 177, line 14.	*For*	interior	,,	inferior.
p. 188, line 3.	,,	impercepitibly	,,	imperceptibly.
,, ,, 12.	,,	contraditions	,,	contradictions.

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